



FAWLTY TOWERS

John Cleese and Connie Booth

WALDORF SALAD

COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS

THE HOTEL INSPECTORS

Waldorf Salad

Basil Fawlty

Sybil Fawlty

Manuel

Polly

Terry

Major Gowen

Miss Tibbs

Miss Gatsby

Mrs Hamilton

Mr Hamilton

Mrs Johnstone

Mr Johnstone

Miss Hare

Miss Gurke

Mr Libson

Mr Arrad

Mrs Arrad

The hotel dining room. It is towards the end of dinner-time. The room is very full and Basil, Polly and Manuel are bustling about frantically. Sybil, however, is standing by a central table, ignoring the confusion. She is talking to Mr Libson, who is sitting by himself at the table. He looks extremely bored.

Sybil Oh, it's a lovely part of the world, isn't it? All those beautiful trees and fields and a variety of birds.

Mr Libson Yes, that's true.

Sybil And you can just go there and get away from it all, away from the helter-skelter of modern life. Because we all do need our solitude, don't we.

Mr Libson *(feelingly)* Yes, we do.

Sybil I mean, nowadays it's not easy to find the time to. . . I don't know, enjoy life because there's always things to do, it's all so hectic, isn't it. All of us just running around letting things get on top of us, and quite honestly what's the point?

Basil rushes by on his way to a table where Mr and Mrs Johnstone sit. Mrs Johnstone has a half-finished prawn cocktail in front of her. Mr Johnstone has a finished melon.

Basil Have you finished?

Mrs Johnstone Er, yes . . .

Basil *(starting to collect the plates)* Thank you.

Mr Johnstone Er, my wife . . .

Basil Yes?

Mrs Johnstone I think those prawns might be a bit off.

Basil Oh, I don't think so.

Mrs Johnstone Well, they do taste rather funny

Basil Well, no one else has complained.

Mrs Johnstone Well, I really do think they're off.

Basil But you've eaten half of them.

Mrs Johnstone Well, I didn't notice it at the start.

Basil You didn't notice at the start?

Mrs Johnstone Well, it was the sauce, you see. I wasn't sure.

Basil So you ate half to make sure?

Mr Johnstone Look, my wife thinks they're off.

Basil Well, what am I supposed to do about it . . . do you want another first course?

Mrs Johnstone No thank you.

Mr Johnstone You're sure?

Mrs Johnstone No, really, I'll just have the main.

Mr Johnstone *(to Basil)* Well, well just cancel it.

Basil Cancel it? Oh, deduct it from the bill, is that what you mean?

Mr Johnstone Well, as it's inedible . . .

Basil Well, only half of it's inedible apparently.

Mr Johnstone Well, deduct half now, and if my wife brings the other half up during the night, we'll claim the balance in the morning. And now we'd like our lambs, please.

Basil makes off toward the kitchen. Sybil is still boring Mr Libson.

Sybil Well, three we know have passed on this year, all in their early sixties. So I've cut out butter . . .

Manuel comes in with a jug of water: He can't remember who it is for and looks round, Mr Arrad, sitting with his wife, tries to attract Manuel's attention, but Manuel puts the jug down at a table occupied by two middle-aged women, Miss Gurke and Miss Hare.

Miss Hare No, really it's all right.

Miss Gurke But it's all gristle.

Miss Hare No, honestly, there's a nice bit, see?

Miss Gurke Oh, Doris, it's awful.

Miss Hare Oh, no, dear, it's not as bad as that. I've had worse.

Miss Gurke I don't know how they get away with it.

Basil *(checking as he passes, pro forma)* Everything all right?

Miss Gurke Yes, thank you.

Miss Hare Very good, thank you very much . . .

Basil moves away. Miss Gurke looks disapprovingly after him. Sybil finally leaves Mr Libson and goes into the kitchen. Basil comes up to Mr and Mrs Arrad's table.

Basil Everything to your satisfaction?

Mr Arrad Yes, thank you.

Basil Thank you. *(he moves on)*

Mrs Arrad *(to her husband)* Why don't you say something?

Mr Arrad There's no point, is there. We just won't come here again.

Mrs Arrad Then I'll say something.

Mr Arrad Look, it won't do any good, we're leaving tomorrow.

Mr Arrad Well, I'm going to. We've been sitting here waiting for nearly half an hour. . .

But Manuel has at last arrived with their meals – plaice for Mrs Arrad and lamb for Mr Arrad.

- Mr Arrad** What's this?
- Manuel** Si.
- Mr Arrad** Look, I ordered the cold meat salad. I've been waiting about half an hour for it.
- Manuel** Salad?
- Mr Arrad** Yes.
- Manuel** You want change?
- Mr Arrad** . . . No! I don't want to change . . .
- Manuel** OK. *(starts to leave)*
- Mr Arrad** Wha . . . where are you going? I don't want this!
- Manuel** You say you no want change.
- Mr Arrad** I want the salad.
- Manuel moves off mystified. Basil is in the vicinity.*
- Mrs Arrad** *(nudging her husband)* Go on . . .
- Mr Arrad** *(to Basil)* Excuse me.
- Basil** Yes.
- Mr Arrad** Look, we've been waiting here for about half an hour now, I mean we gave the waiter our order . . .
- Basil** Oh, him. He's hopeless, isn't he?
- Mr Arrad** Yes, well, I don't wish to complain, but when he finally does bring something, he's got it wrong.
- Basil** You think I don't know? I mean, you only have to eat here. We have to live with it. I had to pay his fare all the way from Barcelona. But we can't get the staff, you see. It's a nightmare. *(he moves off feeling better)*
- Mrs Arrad** *(to her husband)* You were supposed to be complaining to him.
- Manuel comes running up with a plate of meat salad He puts it in front of Mr Arrad. Then he looks at it and stares. Mr Arrad takes his first mouthful; Manuel whips the plate away again. Basil sees this. Manuel peers at the plate.*
- Basil** *(taking the plate away from Manuel)* Will you stop that! *(he puts it in front of Mr and Mrs Arrad)* I'm sorry about that.
- Manuel whispers in Basil's ear. Basil peers over Mr Arrad's shoulder.*
- Basil** Excuse me. *(he takes the plate and examines it, puts it back and then removes it again just as Mr Arrad is about to start eating; he consults Manuel)* Where?
- Manuel** *(pointing)* Look!
- Basil** Thank you so much. *(he replaces the plate)* Enjoy your meal.

He moves off. The Arrads peer at the plate with suspicion. Manuel mimes whatever it is he has seen by flapping his arms. Basil passes the Johnstones' table.)

Mr Johnstone You haven't forgotten our lambs, have you?

Basil No, no, they're coming, they're coming!

Mrs Arrad *(calling Basil)* Excuse me. There is sugar in the salt-cellar.

Basil . . . Anything else?

Mrs Arrad I've just put it all over the plaice.

Basil All over the place? What were you doing with it?

Mrs Arrad All over the plaice.

Basil *(catching Polly)* Polly - would you ask Terry not to finish yet - we need another one of these. *(hands her the plaice)* There is sugar on it.

Polly What a sweet plaice.

Basil What?

Polly I'll have it re-placed.

Basil What is sugar doing in this salt-cellar? What do you think we pay you for?

Polly My staying power? *(goes into the kitchen with the offending plaice)*

Mr Johnstone *(calling Basil)* The lamb!

Basil I'm getting them, I'm getting them!

He goes into the kitchen. Sybil comes out; Miss Gurke gestures to her.

Miss Gurke Er . . . excuse me.

Sybil Yes?

Miss Gurke I'm sorry, but do you think we could cancel our fruit salads?

Sybil Well, it's a little tricky; Chef's just opened the tin.

Miss Gurke Oh.

Miss Hare Never mind, I'm sure it'll be very nice.

Sybil goes back to Mr Libson's table with his next course.

Sybil There we are.

Mr Libson Ah, thank you.

Sybil Oh yes, I do like really beautiful places . . .

Basil *(coming by carrying several things)* Busy this evening, isn't it.

Sybil *(to Mr Libson)* I'll tell you a few of my favourites . . .

Basil I said it's busy this evening.

- Sybil** I'm talking to Mr Libson, Basil.
- Basil** Good. Well, that's a help.
- Sybil** I'm sure you can cope.
- Basil** Oh, yes, I can cope. Coping's easy. Not pureeing your loved ones, that's the difficult part.
- He is about to deliver the two plates of lamb to Mr Johnstone, who is relieved that the moment has at last come. However, the reception bell sounds.*
- Sybil** *(to Mr Libson)* Did you know Bideford bridge has all different. . .
- Basil** There's someone at reception, dear. Shall I get it?
- Sybil** Yes.
- Basil** It's my turn is it? Fine. Oh yes! So it is. Funny, it's been my turn for fifteen years. *(he manages to get the door to the lobby open, still holding the plates)* Still, when I'm dead it'll be your turn, dear - you'll be 'it'.
- Mr Johnstone** *(seeing his lambs disappear)* Excuse me, there are two lambs here.
- Basil** I'll have them removed if they're bothering you.
- He moves into the lobby. Mrs Hamilton is standing by the reception desk.*
- Basil** *(aggressively)* Yes?
- Mrs Hamilton** Good evening.
- Basil realizes she is rather attractive and slows down a bit.*
- Mr Johnstone** *(from the dining room)* Are those lambs ours?
- Basil** *(over his shoulder)* Not yet. *(to Mrs Hamilton)* Good evening.
- Mrs Hamilton** I reserved a room, by telephone, this morning . . . Mr and Mrs Hamilton.
- Basil** Indeed yes. I remember it well. *(he goes behind the desk, putting down the plates)* Ah, excellent, Hamilton? . . .
- Mrs Hamilton** That's right.
- Basil** Well, may I welcome you to Fawlty Towers. I trust your stay will be an enjoyable and gracious one.
- Mr Johnstone** *(appearing in the lobby and pointing at the plates)* Could we have those now?
- Basil** Oh, by all means.
- Mr Johnstone** Finished with them, have you?
- Basil** Absolutely. *(Mr Johnstone takes the plates and turns.)* Bon apétitttttte.
- Mr Johnstone turns round. Basil beams.*
- Mr Johnstone** *(to Mrs Hamilton)* I recommend the self-service here. It's excellent.

- Basil** That'll be all, thank you.
- Mr Johnstone** What?
- Basil** Your lambs will be getting cold, Mr Johnstone.
- Mr Johnstone** Colder.
- Basil** If you'd like them warmed up?
- Mr Johnstone** Forget it. *(he exits angrily)*
- Basil** You could get your wife to sit on 'em. *(to Mrs Hamilton)* I'm so sorry, but the rubbish we get in here. . . Now, if you'd be so very kind as to fill that form out . . . *(turns to get the key)* Mr and Mrs Hamilton, ah yes, now we've put you in room twelve, which has a charming panoramic view overlooking the lawn.
- Mr Hamilton has come in. He is aggressively American. He is also very wet,*
- Mr Hamilton** What a drive, eh? Everything on the wrong side of the road - and the weather, what do you get for living in a climate like this, green stamps? It's terrible.
- Basil** *(to Mrs Hamilton)* I'm sorry about this.
- Mr Hamilton** Took five hours from London . . . Couldn't find the freeway. Had to take a little back street called the M5.
- Basil** Well, I'm sorry it wasn't wide enough for you. A lot of the English cars have steering wheels.
- Mr Hamilton** They do, do they? You wouldn't think there was room for them inside.
- Basil** *(quietly, to Mrs Hamilton)* See what I mean?
- Mrs Hamilton** What?
- Basil** *(to himself)* Rub-bish. *(flicks a glance at Mr Hamilton and subtly holds his nose)*
- Mrs Hamilton** May I introduce my husband?
- Basil** *(rubs his nose hard, smiles at Mr Hamilton, then looks round)* The rubbish we get in here. *(picks up a sheet of paper)* Look at that. *(rolls it into a ball; Sybil appears at the kitchen door Basil waves the ball at her)*
- Sybil** Basil!
- Basil** More rubbish, dear.
- Sybil** What?
- Basil** More of that bloody rubbish. Coh!
- Sybil** Polly and Manuel are going, Basil.
- Basil** Yes, just dealing with Mr and Mrs Hamilton, dear.
- Sybil** Good evening.
- Mr & Mrs Hamilton** Good evening.

Sybil goes into the dining room. Basil rings the bell.

- Basil** Manuel! Manuel will bring your bags to your room. I hope you enjoy your stay.
- Mr Hamilton** Thank you. Do we need to reserve a table for dinner?
- Basil** Dinner?
- Mr Hamilton** Yes. *(Basil does a lot of looking at his watch)* Is there a problem?
- Basil** Well, it is after nine o'clock.
- Mr Hamilton** So?
- Basil** Well, yes . . . we do actually stop serving at nine.
- Mr Hamilton** Nine.
- Basil** Well, look – if you could go straight in I'm sure we could. . .
- Mr Hamilton** Look, we've taken five hours to get here. We'd like to freshen up, maybe have a drink first, you know.
- Basil** Yes . . . um . . . you couldn't do that afterwards?
- Mr Hamilton** Do what?
- Basil** Well. . .
- Mr Hamilton** You mean have our drink before dinner, after dinner, freshen up and go to bed?
- Basil** If you could, it would make things a lot easier for us.
- Mr Hamilton** Shall we go to bed now? Would that make it easier for you?
- Basil** What?
- Mr Hamilton** We're a little tired, fella. We want to clean up, relax. We'll be down in a few minutes.
- Basil** Yes, well, the chef does actually stop at nine.
- Mr Hamilton** Nine. Nine. Why does your chef stop at nine? Has he got something terminal?
- Basil** No, no, but that's when he, in fact, stops.
- Mr Hamilton** Now look, we drove from London to stay here, right? Are you telling me that you can't stay open a few minutes longer so that we can eat properly?
- Basil** Well, we can do you sandwiches . . . ham, cheese . . .
- Mr Hamilton** We want something hot.
- Basil** Toasted sandwiches?
- Mr Hamilton** You're joking.
- Basil** Well . . . not really.
- Mr Hamilton** Not really. *(to Mrs Hamilton)* Can you believe this? *(to Basil)* What the hell's wrong with this country? You can't get a drink after three, you can't eat after nine, is the war still on?
- Basil** No, no, no, but it's the staff, you see.

Manuel enters from the kitchen to collect the bags.

Mr Hamilton Oh, the staff. . .

Basil We have to get the staff. . .

Mr Hamilton How much?

Mr Hamilton What?

Mr Hamilton *(pulling out a wad of notes)* How much of this Mickey Mouse money do you need to keep the chef on for half an hour? One . . . two . . . twenty pounds, uh? Is that enough?

Basil *(pauses to think, then takes the money)* I'll see what I can do.

Mr Hamilton Thank you.

The Hamiltons start up the stairs. Basil looks at the notes, pockets them and hurries across to the kitchen. Manuel, barging through the Hamiltons, leads them up the stairs.

Manuel Excuse me, pardon, pardon, excuse me please, this way please . . .

The kitchen. Basil goes into the kitchen where Terry is washing his hands. As Basil enters, he sees a trifle and sniffs it.

Basil Gosh, that does look absolutely marvellous, doesn't it. Um . . . oh, Terry, I almost forgot. Some guests have just arrived, right at the last moment as usual, typical . . . I'm sorry, but this puts us out just as much as it puts you out.

Terry Don't put me out, Mr Fawltly.

Basil Er, no, they want dinner, you see, and they insist first on scraping off some of the filth that's somehow got caked to them cruising down the M5.

Terry Well, I got my class tonight, Mr Fawltly.

Polly *(looking round the door)* We're ready, Terry.

Terry Right-ho, Poll. *(Polly goes)*

Basil Wait a minute, wait a minute. . . didn't I say? I mean that I will make it up to you, did I? Out of my own pocket.

Terry It's not the money, Mr Fawltly. My karate means a lot to me.

Basil Half an hour's overtime and a taxi home.

Terry If I miss a week, Mr Fawltly, next week I don't get out in one piece.

Basil An hour's overtime.

Terry Sorry, Mr Fawltly.

Basil What am I going to say to them?

Terry . . . Two hours.

Basil What?

- Terry** Two hours' overtime.
- Basil** I thought you said it wasn't the money.
- Terry** It ain't, but I can't think what you're going to say to your guests.
- Basil** Look, Terry, I'd pay you two hours' overtime if I could afford it!
- A car horn sounds outside.*
- Terry** *(making to go)* Sorry, Mr Fawlty.
- Basil** An hour and a half!
- Terry** Cash?
- Basil** Cash!
- Terry** All right, Mr Fawlty, an hour and a half, but I go at half-past nine, then I still get some of my class.
- Basil** . . . And I do the washing up.
- Terry** Well, you know how it is, Mr Fawlty.
- Basil** Yes, I know how it is. I pay you for an hour and a half and you clear off after half an hour, that's how it is. *(gives him some money)* That's socialism.
- Terry** Oh, no, Mr Fawlty, that's the free market.
- Polly** *(looking round the door again)* Come on, 'Terry. Mustn't keep the lady waiting.
- Basil** The lady!
- Terry** She's from Finland, Mr Fawlty, and very pretty. Tall, blonde. . . *(Terry gestures frantically at Polly from behind Basil)* um . . . *(she stops and exits)*
- Basil** This Finnish floozie's your karate teacher, is she?
- Terry** Well, it's a sort of karate, ain't it . . .
- Basil** Right, give me that. *(grabs the money back)*
- Terry** What?
- Basil** I pay you overtime to miss a class, not to keep some bit of crumpet hanging around.
- Terry** Yes, but she's. . .
- Basil** No, it's all right, I'm doing the washing-up, I'll do the cooking too. You go off and enjoy yourself. Don't worry about me, you go and have a good time. I'll be all right. Go and have a bit of fun with a Finn.
- Terry exits into the lobby. Polly is waiting.*
- Polly** *(Calls out)* Come on, Manuel.
- Polly and Terry exit through the main doors. Manuel comes in from the bar.*
- Manuel** Hey, where are you, Polly? Wait for me. *(he chases off after them)*

FADE

FADE UP

The dining room, a bit later. Sybil is sitting at a table near the door, having had a starter and is reading a Harold Robbins novel. The door opens and Basil ushers in the Hamiltons.

Basil Thank you. If you'd care to sit over here . . .

Sybil Good evening.

Mr & Mrs Hamilton Good evening.

Sybil Is your room to your liking?

Mr Hamilton Yes, it's very nice.

Mrs Hamilton Very nice, thank you.

Sybil Oh good. *(she rises and carries her finished starter back to the kitchen)*

Basil I'll just get you tonight's menu . . . Oh, would you care for a drink before your meal?

Mr Hamilton A scotch and water and a screwdriver, please.

Basil Um . . . and for you, madam?

Mrs Hamilton The screwdriver's for me.

Basil I see . . . um . . . would you like it now or after your meal?

Mrs Hamilton Well, now, please.

Basil There's nothing I can put right?

Mrs Hamilton What?

Basil Absolutely. So it's one scotch and one screwdriver.

Mr Hamilton I think I'll join you. *(to Basil)* Make that two screwdrivers, will you?

Basil You'd like a screwdriver as well?

Mr Hamilton You got it.

Basil Fine. So it's one scotch and you each need a screwdriver.

Mr Hamilton No, no, no. Forget the scotch. Two screwdrivers.

Basil I understand. And you'll leave the drinks.

Mr Hamilton What?

Basil Nothing to drink.

Mr Hamilton What do you mean, 'Nothing to drink'?

Basil Well you can't drink your screwdrivers, can you. Ha ha.

Mr Hamilton What else would you suggest that we do with them?

- Mrs Hamilton** Vodka and orange juice.
- Basil** Ah, certainly madam.
- Mr Hamilton** Make that two. And forget about the screwdrivers.
- Basil** You're sure?
- Mr Hamilton** We can manage without them.
- Basil** As you wish, sir. *(he goes into the kitchen)*
- Mr Hamilton** *(reading from a tourist magazine)* 'Relax in the carefree atmosphere of old English charm . . .' *(he sees Sybil who has just come back in)* I hope we're not intruding on your dinner hour.
- Sybil** *(sitting at her table)* Not at all, no. You're American?
- Mr Hamilton** That's right.
- Sybil** Where are you from?
- Mrs Hamilton** California.
- Sybil** How lovely. You're English, though?
- Mrs Hamilton** Yes, but I've been over there ten years now.
- Sybil** Ten years. Do you ever get home-sick?
- Mrs Hamilton** Oh, yes. But I love it there - the climate's so wonderful. You can swim and sunbathe and then after lunch drive up into the mountains and ski.
- Sybil** How wonderful. *(Basil enters)*
- Mr Hamilton** I like England and the English people, but I sure couldn't take this climate.
- Mrs Hamilton** Harry finds it too gloomy.
- Basil** *(putting the drinks on the Hamiltons' table)* Oh, I don't find it too gloomy. Do you, Sybil?
- Sybil** Yes I do, Basil.
- Basil** Well, yes, my wife finds it too gloomy. I find it rather bracing.
- Sybil** What do you find bracing, Basil? . . . the damp, the drizzle, the fog. . .
- Basil** Well, it's not always like this, dear. It changes.
- Sybil** My husband's like the climate. He changes. This morning he went on for two hours about the 'bloody weather', ha, ha, ha.
- Basil** Yes, well, it has been unusually damp this week, in fact, but normally we're rather spoiled down here on the English Riviera.
- Sybil** Mr and Mrs Hamilton were telling me about California. You can swim in the morning and then in the afternoon you can drive up into the mountains and ski.
- Basil** It must be rather tiring.
- Mr Hamilton** Well, one has the choice.

- Basil** Yes; but I don't think that would suit me. I like it down here. It's very mild all the year round. We have palm trees here in Torquay, you know. Do you have palm trees in California?
- Mr Hamilton** Burt Lancaster had one, they say. But I don't believe them. *(he tastes his screwdriver)* What the hell is that?
- Basil** Er . . . Vodka and orange juice . . .
- Mr Hamilton** Orange juice?
- Mrs Hamilton** I'm afraid it's not fresh.
- Basil** Isn't it? *(he takes it and sniffs it)*
- Mrs Hamilton** No.
- Basil** We've just opened the bottle.
- Mr Hamilton** Look, fresh means it comes out of an orange, not out of a bottle.
- Basil** Ah! You'd like freshly squeezed orange juice.
- Mr Hamilton** As against freshly unscrewed orange juice, yes.
- Basil** . . . Leave it to me, I mean, I'll get chef on to it straight away *(he bustles off into the kitchen)*
- Sybil** Sorry about that. A lot of English people are used to the flavour of the bottled . . .
- Mrs Hamilton** Oh, that's all right. It's just that back home fresh orange juice comes like running water.
- Sybil** Does it really? 'Course, it's so good for your skin, isn't it. I'd love to go to California someday. It looks so exciting. *(she indicates her book)*
- Mrs Hamilton** Oh! *Never Love A Stranger* Do you like it?
- Sybil** Oh, I love Harold Robbins. I've read this one three times.
- Mrs Hamilton** *The Pirate* is his best, I think. I read them when Harry's away. I just don't seem to have the time when he's home.
- Sybil** Who needs Harold Robbins when you've got the real thing. *(she laughs; Basil enters)*
- Mrs Hamilton** How long have you been married, Mrs Fawltly?
- Sybil** Oh, since 1485.
- Basil** *(putting the screwdrivers down)* There we are, fresh orange juice.
- Sybil** But seriously though, his men are all so interesting. Ruthless and sexy and . . . powerful.
- Basil** *(handing out the menus)* Who's this, then, dear? Proust? E. M. Forster?
- Sybil** Harold Robbins.
- Basil** Oh, of course, yes. My wife likes Harold Robbins. After a hard day's slaving under the hair-dryer she needs to unwind with a few aimless thrills.

- Sybil** Basil! *(she exits to the kitchen)*
- Basil** Have you ever read any? It really is the most awful American . . . well, not America, but trans-Atlantic tripe. A sort of pornographic muzak. Still, it keeps my wife off the streets.
- Mr Hamilton** We both like him.
- Basil** *(looks disturbed for a moment)* Oh! Robbins!
- Mr Hamilton** What?
- Basil** Harold Robbins. I thought you meant that awful man, what's his name, oh, Harold . . . Robinson. Have you read any Harold Robinson? Ah! Painful!
- Mr Hamilton** How about Waldorf salad.
- Basil** Was that one? Yes, you're absolutely right. Oh, that was a shocker, wasn't it?
- Mr Hamilton** . . . Could you make me a Waldorf salad.
- Basil** Oh . . . a . . . Wa . . . ?
- Mr Hamilton** Waldorf salad.
- Basil** . . . I think we're just out of waldorfs.
- Mr Hamilton** *(to Mrs Hamilton)* I don't believe this.
- Mrs Hamilton** It's not very well known here, Harry.
- Basil** Yes, may I recommend tonight the . . .
- Mr Hamilton** Look, I'm sure your chef knows how to fix me a Waldorf salad, huh?
- Basil** I wouldn't be too sure.
- Mr Hamilton** Well, he's a chef, isn't he?
- Basil** Yes, you wouldn't prefer. . .
- Mr Hamilton** *(shouting)* Well, find out, will you? Just go out there and see if he knows how to fix me a Waldorf salad!
- Basil** . . . Of course. *(he goes into the kitchen, but reappears almost immediately)* He's not absolutely positive . . . he's almost got it. It's lettuce and tomatoes, walled in with . . . ?
- Mr Hamilton** No, no, no, it's celery, apples, walnuts, grapes.
- Mrs Hamilton** In a mayonnaise sauce.
- Basil** Right. Incidentally, he did ask me to say that he does specially recommend the pâté tonight.
- Mr Hamilton** I don't want pâté.
- Basil** Or the . . . the grapefruit.
- Mr Hamilton** Grapefruit?
- Basil** The grapefruit.

- Mr Hamilton** How's it done?
- Basil** Well, it's halved, with a cherry in the centre. *(Sybil re-enters)*
- Mr Hamilton** Look! I haven't paid you twenty pounds to have some guy cut a grapefruit in half and stick a cherry in the centre. *(Sybil reacts to the 'twenty pounds')*
- Basil** Exactly.
- Mr Hamilton** I want a Waldorf salad.
- Basil** Absolutely. One Waldorf salad.
- Mrs Hamilton** And a green salad for me.
- Basil** And one green salad. Yes. And if we can't manage the Waldorf salad . . . ?
- Mr Hamilton** *(loudly)* I want a Waldorf salad! And a couple of *filets mignons*. *(Basil is flummoxed)*
- Mrs Hamilton** Steaks.
- Mr Hamilton** Steaks!!
- Basil** Steaks!
- Mr Hamilton** Done rare.
- Basil** Done rare!
- Mr Hamilton** Not out of a bottle
- Basil** Not out of a bottle. Right *(he disappears into the kitchen)*
- Sybil** Would you like to see the wine List? *(she gives it to them)*
- Mr Hamilton** Thank you.
- Sybil** May I ask, did you say you'd paid twenty pounds . . . ?
- Mr Hamilton** Yes, but it's not the money, my wife and I, we wanted dinner and your husband said your chef usually leaves at nine o'clock. . .
- Sybil** Well, this can't be right. There's no reason chef couldn't stay. . .
- Basil** *(re-entering from the kitchen)* I'm awfully sorry, he's forgotten already . . . walnuts, cheese . . .
- Mr Hamilton** No! No cheese! It's celery, apples, walnuts, grapes!
- Basil** Right!
- Mr Hamilton** In mayonnaise.
- Basil** Right! *(shouting into the kitchen)* Now come on! *(goes into the kitchen)*
- Sybil** Um . . . would you excuse me one moment?
- Mr Hamilton** Excuse me . . . a bottle of the Volnay, please.
- Sybil** Of course. Thank you. *(she goes into the kitchen)*

In the kitchen. Basil is rummaging frantically in a large cardboard box

- Sybil** What's this about twenty pounds, Basil?
- Basil** There's no celery. Would you believe it?
- Sybil** I'll find the celery. What about this twenty pounds?
- Basil** He gave me twenty pounds to keep the kitchens open, but chef wouldn't . . . I mean, where does he put things?
- Sybil** If you'd just look. . .
- Basil** I have looked. There's no celery, there's no grapes . . . walnuts! That's a laugh, easier to find a packet of sliced hippopotamus in suitcase sauce than a walnut in this bloody kitchen. *(he looks in the fridge)*
- Sybil** Now, we've got apples. *(holding up some)*
- Basil** Oh, terrific! Let's celebrate. We'll have an apple party. Everybody brings his own apple and stuffs it down somebody's throat.
- Sybil** Basil, I'll find everything. Just go and get a bottle of Volnay.
- Basil** What's a waldorf, anyway - a walnut that's gone off?
- Sybil** It's the hotel, Basil. The Waldorf Hotel. In New York.
- Basil** *(struck with an idea)* Wait, wait.
- Sybil** *(warningly)* Basil.

In the dining room. Basil enters from the kitchen

- Basil** *(going up to the Hamiltons)* Everything all right?
- Mrs Hamilton** Yes thank you.
- Mr Hamilton** Never been better.
- Basil** Oh good. Urm. . . by the way. I wonder . . . have you by any chance ever tried a Ritz salad?
- Mr Hamilton** A Ritz salad?
- Basil** Yes - it's a traditional old English . . . thing. It's apples, grapefruit and potatoes in a mayonnaise sauce.
- Mr Hamilton** No, don't think I ever tried that.
- Basil** Ah!
- Mr Hamilton** Don't think I ever will, either.
- Basil** No, well, that's probably pretty sound. Well, look, urm . . . about this Waldorf salad of yours . . .
- Mr Hamilton** Yes?

- Basil** Um . . . I've had a bit of a tete-a-tete with chef, and the point is, we're all right on the apples. Absolutely no problem with them at all. Now . . . on the celery front, well, er . . . perhaps I should explain, we normally get our celery delivered on a Wednesday, alongwith our cabbages, onions, walnuts, grapes . . . that sort of thing, but this week the driver. . .
- Mr Hamilton** Mr Fawlty.
- Basil** Yes, he was putting the crate into the van . . .
- Mr Hamilton** I'm not interested.
- Basil** . . . and he sort of slipped forward and the van door caught his arm, like that, and he may have fractured it. . .
- Mr Hamilton** You don't have any.
- Basil** They did the X-rays and we'll know tomorrow whether they're going to have to operate, and to cut a long story short . . . we don't have any, no. But . . . urm . . . still. . . it makes you think how lucky you are, doesn't it. Here we are, with all our limbs functioning. I mean, quite honestly, if you've got your health, what else matters?
- Mr Hamilton** What a bunch of crap!
- Basil** (*interested*) Oh, do you think so? I always feel . . .
- Mr Hamilton** What the hell's going on here!? It says hotel outside - now, is this a hotel or isn't it?
- Basil** Well . . . within reason.
- Mr Hamilton** You know something, fella - if this was back in the States I wouldn't board my dog here.
- Basil** Fussy, is he? Poodle?
- Mr Hamilton** (*standing up and facing Basil*) Poodle! I'm not getting through to you, am I? You know, I stay in hotels all over the world and this is the first time I've had to bribe a chef to cook me a meal and then found out he doesn't have the basic goddam ingredients. Holy Cow, can't you see what a crummy dump this is?
- Basil** (*shouting towards the kitchen*) You're listening to this, are you, Terry?
- Mr Hamilton** I'm talking to you!
- Basil** (*to kitchen*) It's all right, Terry, you can get on with . . .
- Mr Hamilton** Shut up, will you, and listen to me. Can't you see this ain't good enough?
- Basil** Yes, I see what you mean.
- Mr Hamilton** And then you give me some half-assed story about some delivery guy busting his arm. Now look, Fawlty, if your chef couldn't find the ingredients from that guy, why didn't he get them from somebody else, uh?
- Basil** Exactly. Hopeless.
- Mr Hamilton** (*amazed*) What?

- Basil** He's hopeless. Absolutely hopeless.
- Mr Hamilton** Right. You're the manager, aren't you? You're responsible. So what are you going to do about it, uh?
- Basil** *(confidently)* . . . I'll have a word with him.
- Mr Hamilton** Have a word with him? Man, you've got to tell him. Lay it on the line.
- Basil** Lay it on the line?
- Mr Hamilton** Tell him, if he doesn't get on the ball you're going to bust his ass.
- Basil** Bust his . . .
- Mr Hamilton** I'll tell him. *(makes for kitchen)*
- Basil** *(restraining him)* No, no!! No, I'll tell him. Leave it to me.
- Mr Hamilton** Tell him!
- Basil** I will. I've got it. I've got it. I've got it. Bust his . . . ?
- Mr Hamilton** Ass!!
- Basil** Oh, that! Right! . . . And two green salads?
- He goes into the kitchen. As he does so Sybil comes out with a Waldorf salad and a green salad. She puts them on the table.*
- Sybil** Here we are. One green salad, and one Waldorf salad.
- Mr Hamilton** *(confused)* But I thought that. . .
- Sybil** Yes? *(the reception bell tings)* Oh - would you excuse me one moment?
- She exits. The Hamiltons peer at their salads. At this moment Basil's voice is heard from the kitchen*
- Basil's voice** No, it's not good enough, do you hear me, it's not good enough! *(pretending to be Terry)* But Mr Robinson hurt his arm! *(as himself)* That's a bunch of arse, that's what that is!
- Mrs Hamilton** *(tasting her salad)* It's fine.
- Basil's voice** Why can't you make a Waldorf salad?
- Mr Hamilton** *(to Mrs Hamilton)* Waldorf salad?
- Mrs Hamilton** *(surprised)* Yes.
- Basil's voice** First thing tomorrow you get the ingredients for a Waldorf salad or I'm going to break your bottom. *(as Terry)* Oh no, no, you can't do that. *(as himself)* No, I mean it. I mean it!
- Sybil** *(coming back in from the lobby)* Everything all right?
- Mrs Hamilton** Yes, thank you.
- Sybil** You're sure there's nothing . . . ?

- Mr Hamilton** No, really. It's very good.
- Sybil** Oh, good.
- Mr Hamilton** Oh . . . your chef?
- Sybil** Yes?
- Mr Hamilton** Has he been with you long?
- Sybil** About six months. He used to work at Dorchester.
- Mrs Hamilton** At the Dorchester?
- Sybil** No, in Dorchester. About forty miles away . . .
- Basil** *(entering with two green salads)* Here we are, two green salads.
- Sybil** Basil!
- Basil** Yes, dear?
- Sybil** Mr Hamilton has his Waldorf salad, dear.
- Basil** No, dear, chef couldn't make it. He didn't have the ingredients. I've just smashed his backside about it.
- Sybil** *(pointing to the salad)* But there it is.
- Basil** What!?
- Sybil** There's the Waldorf salad. Chef found the ingredients. *(she takes the two green salads)*
- Mr Hamilton** It's fine.
- Basil** *(to Sybil, between his teeth)* Well, if he found the ingredients, why didn't he tell me? It would have been perfectly simple, wouldn't it? Has he been struck dumb? Or has somebody torn his tongue out in the last two minutes?
- Sybil** Basil.
- Mr Hamilton** Maybe Robinson's arm got better.
- Basil** I'm sorry about this.
- Mr Hamilton** It's all right.
- Basil** No it isn't.
- Mr Hamilton** It doesn't matter.
- Basil** Well, it matters to me.
- Mr Hamilton** Not to me. I've got my Waldorf salad.
- Basil** *(snatching it away)* Would you excuse me.
- Mr Hamilton** For God's sake!
- Basil** *(screaming)* Chef!! What's the meaning of this? *(he exits into the kitchen)*
- Sybil** Basil, would you bring that back immediately. *(to Mr Hamilton)* I'm sorry, I'll just get it back for you. *(she goes toward the kitchen)*

- Basil's voice** *(from the kitchen)* Sorry! I'll give you sorry! Get off your knees! *(Sybil enters the kitchen)* Leave this to me, Sybil, I'll handle it.
- Sybil's voice** Basil!
- Basil** I haven't finished with Chef yet, Sybil, I mean, why didn't you tell me, why didn't you tell me, you stupid cow. Eh, Chef? No, no, I haven't finished, I haven't finished, you can have it in a . . . *(there is a loud bonk)* . . . Oooh!
- Sybil** *(coming back in with the salad)* Sorry about that little confusion, Chef hasn't been with us very long and we've just reorganized the kitchen. *(she gives Mr Hamilton his salad)*
- Mr Hamilton** Thank you.
- Sybil** Oh, you haven't got your wine yet. Basil! . . . Won't be a moment. Basil!
- The kitchen door opens and Basil, holding a cloth to his forehead, looks wanly out.*
- Basil** *(subdued)* Yes, my sweet?
- Sybil** Mr and Mrs Hamilton haven't got their wine yet.
- Basil** Oh.
- Sybil** And Basil - has Chef put the steaks on yet?
- Basil** No - I'll tell him. *(he disappears into the kitchen)*
- Mrs Hamilton** Is your husband all right?
- Sybil** Oh yes. He's just had rather a long day.
- Mr Hamilton** There's just the two of you here, right?
- Sybil** We haven't had a proper holiday for eight years.
- Mrs Hamilton** Eight years?!
- Sybil** Yes, I have to get away occasionally, just for a few hours, even if it's down to the hairdresser or a round of golf or a bridge evening with some of the girls, or a drive in the country sometimes, just on my own, pop down to Cornwall for the day, sometimes it's so beautiful down there . . .
- Basil appears with a hat pulled down strangely over his temple, carrying a bottle of wine.*
- Sybil** *(to the Hamiltons)* Yes, you must visit Cornwall while you're here. *(goes to the kitchen)*
- Basil** Your Volnay, sir.
- Mr Hamilton** Oh, thank you. *(tastes the wine)*
- Basil** Oh, incidentally, I've been talking to Chef and we've sorted out what happened. Apparently he thought he'd already got . . .
- Mr Hamilton** *(approving the wine)* That's very nice, thank you.

- Basil** . . . Thank you . . . got . . . got two for Waldorf salad you see, and in fact he had the ingredients, but. . .
- Mr Hamilton** No, that's fine, it doesn't matter.
- Basil** . . . until he'd made one he didn't realize that he didn't have enough for the second one, you see . . .
- Mr Hamilton** Look , don't let it bother you.
- Basil** *(pulling a letter out of his pocket)* Anyway, this will explain everything.
- Mr Hamilton** What's that?
- Basil** It's a letter.
- Mr Hamilton** A letter?
- Basil** A letter from the chef. It explains everything.
- Mr Hamilton** A letter from the chef!?
- Basil** He wanted to apologize personally, but I didn't want him wasting your time, so I thought. . .
- Mr Hamilton** Oh, just forget about it, will you?
- Basil** I'll read it for you.
- Mr Hamilton** I want my steak!
- Basil** It won't be a moment. *(opens the letter and reads)* 'Dear Mr and Mrs Hamilton, I hope you are well. This is just a brief note to say I take full responsibility for the dreadful mess-ups tonight. If I'd only listened to Mr Fawltly none of this fiasco would have happened.' *(feigning spontaneity)* Oh! *(smoke starts to pour into the room from the kitchen; not seeing it, Basil goes on reading)* 'I'd just like to tell you that such a cock-up . . . *(the Hamiltons have seen the smoke)* . . . has never occurred in my career before, but now that everything has been sorted out I'll be back to my very best form. Signed, Terry.'
- Basil smiles at the Hamiltons, catches their line of vision and sees the smoke. Emitting a strange angry moan, he moves towards the kitchen, looks at the Hamiltons, punches his palm three times meaningfully, and then hurriedly enters the kitchen. Sounds of banging and screaming emerge.*
- Basil's voice** What are you doing? What do you mean, you've burnt it?
- Mr Hamilton** I've had just about enough of this. *(he rises and goes towards the kitchen)*
- Basil's voice** How could you forget about it?
- Mr Hamilton enters the kitchen and stands behind Basil, who is haranguing empty space.*
- Basil** *(pretending to be Terry)* Well, I was making another Waldorf salad. *(as himself)* Making another Waldorf salad? What are you making another Waldorf salad for? *(he takes his hat off and belabours the fridge; as Terry)* Careful, Mr Fawltly! I'm

only a little fellow! *(as himself)* What do you think Mr and Mrs Hamilton must think . . . *(he gestures towards the dining-room door; this brings Mr Hamilton into his field of view; he stops dead, then recovers and smiles welcomingly)* Mr Hamilton, may I introduce Terry, who . . . *(indicates the empty space, then jumps)* Where did he go? *(to Mr Hamilton)* Where's he gone? Did you see him?

Mr Hamilton Maybe he went to get something to eat.

He leaves the kitchen decisively and goes to his wife in the dining room.

Mr Hamilton Come on, honey.

Mrs Hamilton What is it Harry?

Mr Hamilton We're leaving.

Mrs Hamilton Well, what's happened?

Mr Hamilton I'll tell you later.

They both leave the dining room and go into the lobby

In the lobby. The Hamiltons make for the stairs. Basil sticks his head out of the kitchen door

Basil Your steak will be ready in a moment, Mrs Hamilton . . . *(Mr Hamilton checks but Mrs Hamilton goes on upstairs)* He must have heard you coming and panicked and slipped out into the yard, you know, after all the problems. . .

Mr Hamilton How big a butterball do you take me for?

Basil . . . Butter . . . ?

Mr Hamilton Do you think I don't know what's been going on out there?

Basil Oh - it's a bit of a debacle, I'm afraid . . .

Mr Hamilton I'm talking about you taking twenty pounds off me to keep the chef on, letting him go, cooking the meal yourself and then pretending he's still out there.

Basil Oh, that

Mr Hamilton Yes, that. And I'd be interested to know what you've got to say about it.

By this time some guests have gathered within earshot. They include the Major, Mr Arrad and Misses Tibbs and Gatsby.

Basil *(to them)* Good evening.

Mr Hamilton I asked you a question!

Basil Yes - I'm sorry that your meal has not been fully satisfactory this evening. . .

Mr Hamilton *(addressing the guests)* Hah! What I'm suggesting is that this is the crummiest, shoddiest, worst-run hotel in the whole of Western Europe.

The Major No! No! I won't have that! There's a place in Eastbourne . . . what's its name . . . ?

Mr Hamilton *(to Basil)* And that you are the British Tourist Board's answer to Donald Duck.

- Basil** No, look, I know things have gone wrong this evening, but you must remember we've had thousands of satisfied customers . . .
- Mr Hamilton** All right, let's ask them, eh?
- Basil** What?
- Mr Hamilton** Let's ask them. *(to the spectators)* Are you all satisfied? *(a pause; to Mr Arrad)* You - are you satisfied?
- Basil** *(to the Major)* Yes, Major, are you satisfied? I mean, you've been here seven years, are you satisfied?
- The Major** Oh, yes, I love it here.
- Basil** *(to Misses Tibbs and Gatsby)* Ladies, are you satisfied?
- Misses Tibbs & Gatsby** Oh yes, thank you, Mr Fawlty.
- Miss Gatsby** And thank you for asking.
- Basil** Not at all . . . Mr Arrad - are you satisfied?
- Mr Arrad** Er, well, yes, I . . .
- Basil** Miss Gurke?
- Miss Gurke** Oh, very nice, yes . . .
- Basil** *(to Mr Hamilton)* You see . . . satisfied customers! Of course if this little hotel is not to your taste, then you are free to say so, that is your privilege. And I shall of course refund your money. *(he looks for the £20; unseen by him, Mr Johnstone comes up and stands behind him)* I know how important it is to you Americans. But you must remember *(he hands the money over)* that here in Britain there are things that we value more, things that perhaps in America you've rather forgotten, but which here in Britain are far, far more important. . .
- Mr Johnstone** I'm not satisfied.
- Basil** . . . in our . . . what?
- Mr Johnstone** I'm not satisfied.
- Mrs Johnstone** No, we're not satisfied.
- Basil** Well, people like you never are, are you.
- Mrs Johnstone** What?
- Basil** There is nothing I could do would please a pair like you, short of putting straw in the rooms.
- Mrs Johnstone** I think you're the rudest man I've ever met.
- Basil** I haven't started yet. . .
- Mr Hamilton** *(taking over)* And you're not going to. You're going to stand here nice and quiet while these people say whether or not they're satisfied. And if you move off that spot, Fawlty, I'm going to bust your ass.
- Basil** Everything's bottoms, isn't it.

- Mr Hamilton** *(To Mr Johnstone)* Yes, sir?
- Mr Johnstone** I think this is probably the worst hotel we've ever stayed in.
- Mrs Johnstone** Yes it is. The service here is an absolute disgrace.
- Mrs Arrad** I agree.
- Mr Hamilton** You do?
- Mrs Arrad** Yes. Do you know that we had to wait nearly half an hour for our main course and when it arrived it was wrong.
- Mr Arrad** And when I complained he completely fobbed me off with some rubbish about. . .
- Mrs Johnstone** My prawns were off and when I told him there was an argument.
- Miss Gurke** And her meat was awfully poor.
- Mr Libson** And I asked you to fix my radiator three times and nothing's been done.
- Mr Hamilton** *(grabbing Basil by the tie)* Satisfied customers, huh? Hot dog! *(releases him and goes off upstairs)*
- Basil** This is typical, absolutely typical . . . of the kind of . . . *(shouting)* ARSE I have to put up with from you people. You ponce in here expecting to be waited on hand and foot, well I'm trying to run a hotel here. Have you any idea of how much there is to do? Do you ever think of that? Of course not, you're all too busy sticking your noses into every corner, poking around for things to complain about, aren't you. Well, let me tell you something - this is exactly how Nazi Germany started, you know. A lot of layabouts with nothing better to do than to cause trouble. Well I've had fifteen years of pandering to please the likes of you and I've had enough. I've had it. Come on, pack your bags and get out!
- Mr and Mr Hamilton come back down the stairs.*
- Mrs Hamilton** *(to Basil)* They're packed.
- Mr Hamilton** And order ten taxis, will you, I'll pay for 'em. *(he and Mrs Hamilton go back upstairs)*
- Basil** Come on! Come on!
- Miss Gurke** What?
- Basil** Out, everybody out.
- Mrs Arrad** Out?
- Basil** Come on. Upstairs. Pack your bags. *Adios!* Out!
- Mr Johnstone** It's raining.
- Basil** Well, you should have thought of that before, shouldn't you. Too late now. Come on, out! *Raus! Raus!*

They start to go upstairs. Sybil has appeared in the lobby.

Sybil Basil - what are you doing?

The guests stop on the stairs.

Basil Well, let me explain, my little workhorse. The guests and I have been having a bit of an old chin-wag, and the upshot of it all is, they're off.

Sybil (disbelieving) Off!?

Basil Well, let me put it this way, dear - either they go or I go. *(Sybil just looks at him)* Right! Come on back everybody. My wife's had a better idea. Come on back. I'm going instead. *(the guests come back into the lobby)* Well, goodbye dear. It's been an interesting fifteen years but all good things must come to an end. *(kisses her)* I hope you enjoy your new work here, helping to run a hotel. Goodbye, Major. Goodbye, ladies, give my regards to Polly and Manuel. 'Bye, dear.

He makes to leave. The Hamiltons come downstairs with their bags. Mr Hamilton goes to the Reception desk and picks up the phone to call a taxi.

Sybil You've forgotten your keys, Basil.

Basil So I have dear, yes. *(he gives them to her)* Oh, and goodbye to all the rest of you. I hope you enjoy your stay here. Don't forget - any complaints, don't hesitate to tell my wife. Any hour of the day or night – just shout! 'Bye!

He stalks out through the main door where it is pouring with rain. Whilst he is outside there is a crash of thunder and flash of lightning . . . Back in the lobby Mr Hamilton is on the telephone and the other guests are still clustered around

Mr Hamilton *(to phone)* Ten minutes, that'll be fine.

He puts the phone down. Basil comes back in.

Basil (to Sybil) Hallo dear, I'm back.

Sybil What do you want, Basil?

Basil A room, please. Number twelve is free, I think. I'd like breakfast in bed at half past nine in the morning please, that's eggs, bacon, sausage and tomato, Waldorf salad washed down with lashings of hot screwdrivers. . .

FADE AND END MUSIC

CURTAIN

Communication Problems

Basil Fawlty

Sybil Fawlty

Manuel

Polly

Terry

Major Gowen

Miss Tibbs

Miss Gatsby

Mrs Richards

Mr Yardley

Mr Thurston

Mr Firkins

Mr Mackintosh

Mr Kerr

The hotel lobby. Things are busy; Sybil and Polly are dealing with guests; Basil is finishing a phone call. He goes into the office. Mr Mackintosh comes to the reception desk.

Mackintosh (to Polly) Number seventeen, please.

Sybil (to her guest) Goodbye. Thank you so much. (he moves off; The phone rings and Sybil answers it) Hallo, Fawlty Towers. . . Oh, hallo, Mr Hawkins . . .

Polly (giving Mr Mackintosh his key) I've arranged your car for two this afternoon, then . . .

Mackintosh Thank you. (he moves off and goes upstairs)

Sybil (to phone) Well, you did say today, Mr Hawkins.

Polly (to Mr Yardley, who has approached the desk) Sorry to keep you.

Yardley That's all right. You do accept cheques?

Polly With a banker's card, yes.

Sybil (to phone) Well we'll have to cancel the order, then . . . yes. No, no, five o'clock will be fine. (she ring off) Oh, Polly. . . Brenda can't start till Monday so would you mind doing the rooms till then?

Polly Oh, no, I could do with the money.

Sybil Oh, good. (she goes into the office)

Polly (checking Mr Yardley's cheque) There you are . . . thank you, Mr Yardley.

Yardley moves off. Mr Thurston approaches Polly. Mrs Richards comes in through the main door followed by a taxi driver carrying her case.

Polly (to Thurston) Oh, hello. . . can I help you?

Mrs Richards Girl! Would you give me change for this, please?

Polly In one moment - I'm just dealing with this gentleman. Yes, Mr Thurston?

Mrs Richards What?

Thurston Thank you. I was wondering if you could . . .

Mrs Richards I need change for this.

Polly In a moment - I'm dealing with this gentleman.

Mrs Richards But I have a taxi driver waiting. Surely this gentleman wouldn't mind if you just gave me change.

Polly (to Thurston) Do you?

Thurston No, no, go ahead.

Polly (giving Mrs Richards her change) There you are.

Thurston Can you tell me how to get to Glendower Street . . .

Mrs Richards has paid the driver, who exits. She turns back to Polly.

- Mrs Richards** Now, I've booked a room and bath with a sea view for three nights . . .
- Polly** *(to Mr Thurston)* Glendower Street? *(gets a map)*
- Thurston** Yes.
- Mrs Richards** You haven't finished with me.
- Polly** Mrs? . . .
- Mrs Richards** Mrs Richards. Mrs Alice Richards.
- Polly** Mrs Richards, Mr Thurston. Mr Thurston, Mrs Richards. *(Mrs Richards, slightly thrown, looks at Mr Thurston)* Mr Thurston is the gentleman I'm attending to at the moment.
- Mrs Richards** What?
- Polly** *(Loudly)* Mr Thurston is the gentleman I'm attending to . . .
- Mrs Richards** Don't shout, I'm not deaf.
- Polly** Mr Thurston was here before you, Mrs Richards.
- Mrs Richards** But you were serving me.
- Polly** I gave you change, but I hadn't finished dealing with him. *(to Mr Thurston)* Glendower Street is this one here, just off Chester Street.
- Mrs Richards** Isn't there anyone else in attendance here? Really, this is the most appalling service I've ever . . .
- Polly** *(spotting Manuel)* Good idea! Manuel! Could you lend Mrs Richards your assistance in connection with her reservation? *(to Thurston)* Now . . . *(she continues to give Mr Thurston directions)*
- Mrs Richards** *(to Manuel)* Now, I've reserved a very quiet room, with a bath and a sea view. I specifically asked for a sea view in my written confirmation, so please be sure I have it.
- Manuel** *Que?*
- Mrs Richards** . . . What?
- Manuel** . . . *Que?*
- Mrs Richards** K?
- Manuel** Si.
- Mrs Richards** C? *(Manuel nods)* KC? *(Manuel looks puzzled)* KC? What are you trying to say?
- Manuel** No, no - *Que* - what?
- Mrs Richards** K - what?
- Manuel** Si! *Que* - what?
- Mrs Richards** C. K. Watt?
- Manuel** . . . Yes.
- Mrs Richards** Who is C. K. Watt?

- Manuel** *Que?*
- Mrs Richards** Is it the manager, Mr Watt?
- Manuel** Oh, manager!
- Mrs Richards** He is.
- Manuel** Ah. . . Mr Fawlty.
- Mrs Richards** What?
- Manuel** Fawlty.
- Mrs Richards** What are you talking about, you silly little man. *(turns to Polly, Mr Thurston having gone)* What is going on here? I ask him for my room, and he tells me the manager's a Mr Watt and he's aged forty.
- Manuel** No. No. Fawlty.
- Mrs Richards** Faulty? What's wrong with him?
- Polly** It's all right, Mrs Richards. He's from Barcelona.
- Mrs Richards** The manager's from Barcelona?
- Manuel** No, no. He's from Swanage.
- Polly** And you're in twenty-two.
- Mrs Richards** What?
- Polly** *(leaning over the desk to get close)* You're in room twenty-two. Manuel, take these cases up to twenty-two, will you?
- Manuel** Si.
- He goes upstairs with the cases; Mrs Richards follows. Mr Firkins arrives at the desk as Basil emerges from the office.*
- Firkins** Very nice stay, Mr Fawlty.
- Basil** Ah, glad you enjoyed it. Polly, would you get Mr Firkins' bill, please. Well, when will we be seeing you again?
- Firkins** Not for a few weeks.
- Basil** Oh.
- Firkins** You . . . you're not by any chance a betting man, Mr Fawlty?
- Basil** Er . . . *(looks towards the office; then, more quietly)* Well, I used to be.
- Firkins** Only there's a nice little filly running at Exeter this afternoon.
- Basil** Really?
- Firkins** Dragonfly. *(Polly gives him his bill)* Ah.
- Basil** Dragonfly?
- Firkins** Yes, it's well worth a flutter . . . but pay the tax on it before . . .

Basil *(seeing Sybil coming out)* Sssshhhh! . . . Well, I'm delighted you enjoyed your stay.

Firkins Very nice.

Basil Hope to see you again before long.

Firkins *(paying his bill)* There you are.

Basil Thank you.

Firkins 'Bye, Mr Fawlty.

Sybil Goodbye, Mr Firkins.

Basil *(to Sybil)* A satisfied customer. We should have him stuffed.

Firkins *(from the main door)* Oh, Mr Fawlty. Three o'clock Exeter. Dragonfly. Right? *(he leaves)*

Basil . . . Yes. Good luck. Jolly good luck with it. *(he busies himself. Sybil stares at him; the Major wanders up)* Morning, Major.

The Major Morning, Fawlty.

Basil *(catching Sybil's eye)* Yes, dear?

Sybil What was that about the three o'clock at Exeter, Basil?

Basil Oh, some horse he's going to bet on I expect, dear. *(to The Major)* You're looking very spruce today, Major.

The Major St George's Day, old boy.

Basil Really?

The Major Got a horse, have you? What's its name?

Basil Um . . . *(to Sybil)* Did you catch it, dear?

Sybil Dragonfly, Major.

The Major Going to have a flutter, Fawlty?

Basil No-o, no, no . . .

Sybil No, Basil doesn't bet any more, Major, do you, dear?

Basil No dear, I don't. No, that particular avenue of pleasure has been closed off.

Sybil *(quietish)* And we don't want it opened up again, do we, Basil? *(she goes into the office)*

Basil No, you don't dear, no. The Great Warning-Off of May the 8th. Yes. Good old St George, eh, Major?

The Major Hmmm.

Basil He killed a hideous fire-breathing old dragon, didn't he, Polly?

Polly Ran it through with a lance, I believe.

Manuel *(running in)* Mr Fawlty, Mr Fawlty. Is Mrs . . . er, room, no like . . . she want speak to you, is problem.

Basil *(moving off)* Ever see my wife making toast, Polly? *(he mimes breathing on both sides of a slice of bread)*

The Major Why did he kill it, anyway, Fawlty?

Basil I don't know, Major. Better than marrying it. *(he follows Manuel upstairs)*

The Major Marrying it? But he didn't have to kill it though, did he? I mean, he could have just not turned up at the church.

FADE

FADE UP TO:

Upstairs; Mrs Richards' room. Basil and Manuel enter.

Basil Good morning, madam - can I help you?

Mrs Richards Are you the manager?

Basil I am the owner, madam.

Mrs Richards What?

Basil I am the owner.

Mrs Richards I want to speak to the manager.

Basil I am the manager too.

Mrs Richards What?

Basil I am the manager as well.

Manuel Manaher! Him manaher!

Basil Shut up!

Mrs Richards Oh . . . you're Watt.

Basil . . . I'm the manager.

Mrs Richards Watt?

Basil I'm . . . the . . . manager.

Mrs Richards Yes, I know, you've just told me, what's the matter with you? Now listen to me. I've booked a room with a bath. When I book a room with a bath I expect to get a bath.

Basil You've got a bath.

Mrs Richards I'm not paying seven pounds twenty pence per night plus VAT for a room without a bath.

Basil *(opening the bathroom door)* There is your bath.

Mrs Richards You call that a bath? It's not big enough to drown a mouse. It's disgraceful. *(she moves away to the window)*

- Basil** *(muttering)* I wish you were a mouse, I'd show you.
- Mrs Richards** *(at the window, which has a nice view)* And another thing - I asked for a room with a view.
- Basil** *(to himself)* Deaf, mad and blind. *(goes to window)* This is the view as far as I can remember, madam. Yes, this is it.
- Mrs Richards** When I pay for a view I expect something more interesting than that.
- Basil** That is Torquay, madam.
- Mrs Richards** Well, it's not good enough.
- Basil** Well . . . may I ask what you were hoping to see out of a Torquay hotel bedroom window? Sydney Opera House perhaps? The Hanging Gardens of Babylon? Herds of wildebeest sweeping majestically . . .
- Mrs Richards** Don't be silly. I expect to be able to see the sea.
- Basil** You can see the sea. It's over there between the land and the sky.
- Mrs Richards** I'd need a telescope to see that.
- Basil** Well, may I suggest you consider moving to a hotel closer to the sea. Or preferably in it.
- Mrs Richards** Now listen to me; I'm not satisfied, but I have decided to stay here. However, I shall expect a reduction.
- Basil** Why, because Krakatoa's not erupting at the moment?
- Mrs Richards** Because the room is cold, the bath is too small, the view is invisible and the radio doesn't work.
- Basil** No, the radio works. You don't.
- Mrs Richards** What?
- Basil** I'll see if I can fix it, you scabby old bat. *(he turns the radio on loudly. Manuel puts his fingers in his ears; Basil turns the radio off)* I think we got something then.
- Mrs Richards** What?
- Basil** I think we got something then.
- Mrs Richards** *(to Manuel, who still has fingers in his ears)* What are you doing?
- Manuel** *(loudly)* Que?
- Basil** Madam. . . don't think me rude, but may I ask. . . do you by any chance have a hearing aid?
- Mrs Richards** A what?
- Basil** A hearing aid!!!
- Mrs Richards** Yes, I do have a hearing aid.
- Basil** Would you like me to get it mended?
- Mrs Richards** Mended? It's working perfectly all right.

Basil No, it isn't

Mrs Richards I haven't got it turned on at the moment.

Basil Why not?

Mrs Richards The battery runs down. Now what sort of a reduction are you going to give me on this room?

Basil *(whispering)* Sixty per cent if you turn that on.

Mrs Richards What?

Basil *(loudly)* My wife handles all such matters, I'm sure she will be delighted to discuss it with you.

Mrs Richards I shall speak to her after lunch.

Basil You heard that all right, didn't you.

Mrs Richards What?

Basil Thank you so much. Lunch will be served at half past twelve.

He sweeps out of the room with Manuel just ahead of him.

FADE

FADE UP TO:

The lobby, immediately afterwards. Manuel is coming down the stairs. As he reaches the bottom, Basil catches up with him.

Basil Manuel! Manuel!

Manuel Si.

Basil Are you going to the betting shop today?

Manuel What?

Basil Oh, don't you start. You go betting shop. Today?

Manuel Oh, vetting shop. *Si, si.*

Basil Yes. Now put this *(gives Manuel a fiver)* on this little horse - Dragonfly *(writes it on the back of Manuel's hand)* . . . but big secret. Sybil no know . . .

FADE

FADE UP TO:

The lobby, about 6pm that evening. Sybil is on the phone at the reception desk; she is discussing a wig on a plastic display head.

Sybil No, no, it's lovely, it's just a bit buttery with my skin. I think I need something more topazy, for my colouring, you know, more tonal. . . Have you got Cosmopolitan there? . . . well on page 42 . . . you see Burt Reynolds . . . well there's a girl standing behind him looking at James Caan . . . that sort of colour . . . mmm . . . lovely, all right. *(she rings off and looks into the office where Polly is*

adding up bills) Polly, I've got to check the laundry, could you keep an eye on reception for me?

Polly Sure.

Sybil goes off; Manuel comes furtively through the main doors. He dodges Sybil and peeps into the office.

Manuel *(whispering)* Polly. . . Polly . . . where Mr Fawlty?

Polly I don't know. What's the matter?

Manuel *(very agitated)* I have money for him. He win on horse. But Big Secret. Sh! Mrs Fawlty . . . Sh!

Polly Well give it to me, I'll give it to him.

Manuel gives Polly the money. He sees Sybil coming back and dashes fearfully off. Sybil looks into the office and sees Polly who, rather impressed, is counting the money. Sybil, unseen by Polly, looks at this and then goes into the lobby. Misses Tibbs and Gatsby are coming in through the main doors.

Sybil Good evening, Miss Gatsby. Good evening, Miss Tibbs.

Miss Tibbs Good evening.

Miss Gatsby Good evening.

They turn towards the stairs, down which comes Mrs Richards in a huff

Misses Tibbs & Gatsby Good evening.

Mrs Richards First they give me a room without a bath, then there's no lavatory paper.

Miss Tibbs Oh.

Miss Gatsby Would you like some of ours?

Mrs Richards bangs the reception bell.

Miss Tibbs We keep an extra supply.

Miss Gatsby Would you like some of ours?

Mrs Richards continues to bang the bell. Misses Tibbs and Gatsby go upstairs.

Mrs Richards Hallo! *(Polly emerges)* Girl. There's no paper in my room. Why don't you check these things? That's what you're being paid for, isn't it?

Polly Well, we don't put it in the rooms.

Mrs Richards What?

Polly We keep it in the lounge.

Mrs Richards In the lounge?!!

- Polly** *(really trying to help)* I'll get you some. Do you want plain or ones with our address on it?
- Mrs Richards** Address on it?!!
- Polly** How many sheets? *(Mrs Richards looks appalled)* How many are you going to use?
- Mrs Richards** *(hitting the bell)* Manager!!
- Polly** Just enough for one? Tell me.
- Mrs Richards** Manager!! Manager!!!
- Basil** *(appearing from the kitchen)* Yes? Testing, testing. . .
- Mrs Richards** There you are! I've never met such insolence in all my life. I come down here to get some lavatory paper and she starts asking me the most insulting. . . personal . . . things I ever heard in my life.
- Polly** *(to Basil)* I thought she wanted writing paper.
- Mrs Richards** I'm talking to you, Watt.
- Basil** . . .Watt?
- Mrs Richards** Are you deaf? I said I'm talking to you. I've never met such insolence in my life. She said people use it in the lounge.
- Basil** Yes, yes, she thought you . . .
- Mrs Richards** . . . Then she starts asking me the most. . .
- Basil** No, no, please listen.
- Mrs Richards** . . . appalling questions . . .
- Basil** . . . Please. I can explain! . . .
- Mrs Richards** . . . about. . . about. . .
- Basil** *(actually managing to shout her down)* No, no, look, you see . . . she thought you wanted to write.
- Mrs Richards** Wanted a fight? I'll give her a fight all right.
- Basil** No, no, no, no, wanted to write. *(he mimes writing)*
- Mrs Richards** . . . What?
- Basil** Wanted to write. On the paper.
- Mrs Richards** . . . Why should I want to write on it?
- Basil** *(giving up)* Oh! I'll have some sent up to your room immediately. Manuel! *(rings the bell)*
- Mrs Richards** That doesn't work either. What were you saying just then?
- Basil** Oh. . . turn it on!
- Mrs Richards** What?

- Basil** Turn it . . . (*furious, he writes on a piece of paper*) Turn . . . it. . . on. (*shows it to her*)
- Mrs Richards** I can't read that. I need my glasses! Where are they? (*they are in fact propped up on her forehead*)
- Polly** They're on your head, Mrs Richards.
- Mrs Richards** I've lost them. They're the only pair I've got. I can't read a thing without them.
- Basil** Excuse me . . .
- Mrs Richards** Now, I had them this morning when I was buying the vase. I put them on to look at it. And I had them at tea-time . . .
- Basil** . . . Mrs Richards. . .
- Polly** . . . Mrs Richards . . .
- Basil** . . . Mrs Richards . . . (*she looks up; they both point at her glasses*) Your glasses are there.
- Mrs Richards** (*looks round and sees the dining room*) There?! Well, who put them in there? (*she goes towards the dining room*)
- Polly** . . . No!
- Basil** No, no, no, on your head. . . (*Mrs Richards does not hear him*) On your. . . look. . . on . . . on your head!!!
- Mrs Richards** (*stopping and turning*) What?
- Basil starts to mime again, realizes, throws the paper at her and disappears into the office. Mrs Richards goes on into the dining room. Polly follows Basil into the office.*
- Polly** I'm sorry about that, Mr Fawlty . . . Manuel asked me to give this to you. (*hands him the money*)
- Basil** Oh!! Thank you, Polly. Er . . . Polly. . . not a word to the dragon, eh?
Polly goes out to the lobby; Manuel is there.
- Polly** Manuel, get some loo paper, muchos, for twenty-two.
Manuel runs off towards the bar. Mrs Richards emerges from the dining room.
- Mrs Richards** Are you blind? They were on my head all the time. Didn't you see?
- Polly** Yes.
- Mrs Richards** Didn't God give you eyes?
- Polly** Yes, but I don't use them 'cos it wears the batteries out.
- Mrs Richards** Send my paper up immediately.
Manuel enters from bar carrying a huge stack of loo paper.
- Polly** Manuel, that's too much.

Manuel You say twenty-two.

Mrs Richards goes upstairs, followed by Manuel. Basil bustles into the kitchen merrily rubbing his hands together. Terry is there, vaguely preparing for the evening's cooking.

Basil Evening, Terry. *(sings a quick bit of Cav)* Do you like *Cavallero Rusticana*, Terry?

Terry I never had it, Mr Fawlty.

Basil Never mind. *(he sings another bit, while getting himself a snack)*

Terry You're in a good mood, Mr Fawlty.

Basil Had a little bit of luck on the gee-gees, Terry. Er . . . not a word to the trouble and strife, eh? *(prepares his snack)* De Camptown ladies sing dis song, doo dah, doo dah, the Camptown race track five miles long, doo dah doo dah day. Going to run all night. . . *(Sybil enter)* Going to run all day. . . I'll bet my money on the bob-tail nag . . . *(sees Sybil)* . . . I did it my-y way. Can't stand Frank Sinatra. 'You make me feel so young'. . . rubbish.

Sybil *(suspiciously)* You seem very jolly, Basil.

Basil Hmmm?

Sybil You seem very jolly.

Basil Jolly?

Sybil Yes, jolly. Sort of. . . happy.

Basil Oh, 'happy'. Yes, I remember that. No, not that I noticed, dear. I'll report it if it happens, though.

Sybil *(accusingly)* Well, you look happy to me, Basil.

Basil No I'm not, dear.

Sybil All that dancing about, singing and rubbing your hands.

Basil No, just my way of getting through the day, dear. The Samaritans were engaged.

Sybil I thought maybe you were in love. *(laughs)*

Basil Only with you, light of my life.

Sybil Or had a bit of luck or something . . . *(Basil reacts guiltily; then catches her eye and stares uncomprehendingly; Sybil turns to Terry)* Did Mr Hawkins deliver those tonics, Terry?

Terry Yes he did, Mrs Fawlty.

Sybil goes out into the lobby. Basil dashes into the dining room where Manuel is laying tables.

Basil Manuel, Manuel.

Manuel Your horse, it win, it win!

Basil Ssh!! . . . Manuel . . . (*putting his head close to Manuel*) You know nothing. (*Manuel is puzzled*) You know nothing. '

Manuel You always say, Mr Fawlty. But I learn.

Basil What?

Manuel I learn, I learn.

Basil No, no, no, no . . .

Manuel I get better.

Basil No, you don't understand.

Manuel I do.

Basil No, you don't.

Manuel I do understand that.

Basil Shh . . . you know nothing about the horse.

Manuel (*doubtfully*) I know nothing about the horse.

Basil Yes.

Manuel Ah . . . which horse?

Basil What?

Manuel Which horse I know nothing?

Basil My horse, nitwit.

Manuel Your horse, 'Nitwit'.

Basil No, no, Dragonfly.

Manuel It won!

Basil Yes, I know.

Manuel I know it won, too.

Basil What?

Manuel I put money on for you. You give me money. I go to vetting-shop, I put money on . . .

Basil I know, I know, I know.

Manuel Why you say I know nothing?

Basil Oh. Look. . . look. . . look. . .you know the horse?

Manuel Witnit? Or Dragonfly?

Basil Dragonfly. There isn't a horse called Nitwit. You're the nitwit.

Manuel What is witnit?

Basil (*puts his hand round Manuel's throat*) It doesn't matter . . . look. . . it doesn't matter. . . Oh. . . I could spend the rest of my life having this conversation. Please try to understand before one of us dies.

- Manuel** I try.
- Basil** You're going to forget everything you know about nitwit.
- Manuel** No, Dragonfly.
- Basil** Dragonfly! Yes!
- Manuel** Si, si, si . . . eventually.
- Basil** What?
- Manuel** . . . Eventually. At the end.
- Basil** . . . No, no, no, forget it now!
- Manuel** Now?
- Basil** Well, pretend you forget.
- Manuel** Pretend?
- Basil** Don't say anything to anyone about the horse!!!
- Manuel** Oh, I know that, you tell me this morning. Tch! Choh!
- Basil stares. Sybil puts her head round the door.*
- Sybil** Basil.
- Basil** *(to Manuel)* So don't do it again. *(to Sybil)* Yes, dear?
- Sybil** It's Mrs Richards.
- Basil** A fatal accident?
- Sybil** She's had some money stolen.
- Sybil leaves. Basil moves after her emitting a moan. Manuel grabs his arm.*
- Manuel** Ah, Mr Fawlty, I tell Polly.
- Basil** What? Oh, that's all right. But don't tell anyone else. Not even me. You know nothing.
- Sybil** *(from lobby)* Basil!
- Basil** Yes, dear? *(he catches her up in the lobby)*
- Sybil** Basil, you've got to help me handle this. She's in a frightful state, I can't get a word in edgeways. She's had eighty-five pounds taken from her room, I've said we'll search everywhere but she insists we call the police. What do you do with someone like that, she just keeps on.
- They go into the office*
- In the office. Mrs Richards is there.**
- Basil** *(loudly)* Mrs Richards, how very nice to see you. Are you enjoying your stay?
- Mrs Richards** There's no need to shout. I have my hearing aid on.

Basil . . . Oh!

Sybil Mrs Richards, I've explained to my husb-

Mrs Richards I've just been up to my room. Eighty-five pounds has been taken from my bag which I had hidden under the mattress.

Basil Oh, yes? . . .

Mrs Richards It's a disgrace, I haven't been here a day. What sort of staff do you employ here?

Sybil Mrs Richards . . .

Mrs Richards If you knew anything at all about running a hotel, this sort of thing wouldn't happen! Well. . . what have you got to say for yourself?

Basil launches into a long, but entirely mimed, speech.

Mrs Richards What?

Basil continues to mime. Sybil nudges him.

Sybil *(very quietly)* Basil.

Basil *(mimes 'Yes, dear?')*

Sybil *(very quietly)* Don't.

Mrs Richards Wait. Wait. Wait, wait, I haven't turned it up enough. *(she fiddles with the control and looks at Basil; he rubs his hands)*

Sybil *(whispers warningly)* Basil!

Mrs Richards turns the control full up.

Basil *(fortissimissimo)* I said I suggest. . .

Mrs Richards reels back holding her head in her hands and bangs her head on the shelf the wall behind her.

Mrs Richards My head!

Basil Has it come away?

Sybil *(pushing past Basil)* Get away. *(to Mrs Richards)* Did you bang your head?

Mrs Richards Yes, yes.

Sybil Oh dear, let me have a look.

Basil You'd better go and lie down before something else happens.

Sybil *(elbowing him)* Shut up, Basil.

Mrs Richards Why don't you call the police?

Sybil We will the moment we've searched the rooms.

Mrs Richards My money's been taken.

Sybil Yes, yes, I know, try not to speak.

Basil *(offering something he has found on the floor)* Is this a piece of your brain?

Sybil kicks his shin. He sits down clutching it.

Mrs Richards Eighty-five pounds.

Sybil Take my arm.

Mrs Richards I don't need your arm, thank you. I can get down the stairs perfectly well by myself.

Basil Down the stairs? Oh well, don't stop when you get to the basement. Keep straight on. Give my regards to the earth's core.

Mrs Richard has left the office and goes upstairs. Sybil is looking out the door after her.

Sybil Are you sure you can manage?

Basil And if you give us any more trouble I shall visit you in the small hours and put a bat up your nightdress. *(still rubbing his shin)* Well, that was fun, wasn't it, dear? The odd moment like that, it's almost worth staying alive for, isn't it? *(Sybil is poker-faced)* It's nice to share a moment like that, isn't it, dear? It's what marriage is all about. I know, it said so on the back of a matchbox.

Sybil Basil, sometimes . . .

Basil *(putting a hand on her waist)* Seriously, Sybil, do you remember, when we were first. . . manacled together, we used to laugh quite a lot.

Sybil *(pushing him away)* Yes, but not at the same time, Basil.

Basil That's true. That was a warning, wasn't it. Should have spotted that. Zoom! - what was that? That was your life, mate. That was quick, do I get another? Sorry mate, that's your lot.

Sybil Basil.

Basil Back to the world of dreams. Yes dear?

Sybil *(irritated)* What are we going to do?

Basil Give it another fifteen years?

Sybil About the money. Do you think we should . . .

Basil Oh, she's left it in her room, or she's dropped it or eaten it or something. We'll get Manuel to go through the room. Polly can check the lounge . . .

Sybil Wait a moment. I saw Polly with some money just now.

Basil Well, there you are.

Sybil It was quite a bit, too. She was counting it in here.

Basil *(gripped by sudden fear)* Well, it's probably hers.

Sybil No . . . she's been very short lately, Basil. I'll ask her.

Basil Well, you can't. You can't just ask her like that, Sybil!

Sybil Why not?

Basil Well . . . it's terribly rude asking someone if money is theirs or not. It'd be so embarrassing. *(the reception phone rings)*

Sybil Rubbish, Basil.

Basil moves into the lobby

In the lobby. Basil answers the phone.

Basil Hallo, Fawlty Towers. *(he cuts off the call by putting his finger on the cradle, but continues to talk as if still connected)* Polly Shearman? Certainly. I'll get her straight away. *(he puts the phone down and hurries towards the dining room)*

Sybil *(calling)* Polly . . .

Basil rushes into the dining room

In the dining room. Polly is putting flowers on the tables.

Basil Polly! . . . Polly, she saw you with the money.

Polly What?

Basil Sybil. She saw you counting the horse money. She's coming to ask you . . . *(Sybil enters)* Hallo dear. Here she is. Found her in here. As I was just saying, Polly, my wife would like to have a word with you about a slightly delicate matter.

Sybil It's not delicate, Basil, don't be silly. *(to Polly)* He thinks it's embarrassing for me to ask you about that money I saw you with earlier on in the office. I was wondering if someone had handed it in. Mrs Richards has lost some.

Polly The money. . . in the office. . .

Sybil You were counting it, weren't you. Did someone hand it in?

Polly Oh, no. No, it's mine.

Sybil Yours?

Polly I won it.

Sybil You won it?

Polly On the horse Mr Fawlty got a tip on. *(to Basil)* I hope you don't mind, I just . . .

Basil No, no, not at all.

Sybil I didn't know you bet on the horses, Polly?

Polly Oh, I don't. . . I was in the town, passing the betting shop, and I thought. . . well, why not?

Basil Why not indeed. *(to Sybil)* Jolly good question, eh, dear? Pity you didn't let me put something on, really. Do you realize how much we would have won? Seventy-five pounds for a five-pound stake. Still, you know best.

Sybil Those were the odds, were they, Basil?

- Basil** Yes, that's right, dear. Fourteen to one. I listened in on the wireless just to make sure it had triumphed. *(to Polly)* Enjoy your winnings, Polly. *(he goes into the lobby but listens in to the conversation in the dining room)*
- Polly** Thank you.
- Sybil** *(quietly)* Polly?
- Polly** Yes, Mrs Fawlty?
- Sybil** What was the name of the horse?
- Polly** Er . . . the name. . . I've gone blank. . .
Basil dashes to the dining-room door, behind Sybil. He mouths 'Dragonfly'. Polly stares. He points to Sybil and flaps his hands.
- Polly** Bird Brain.
- Sybil** Bird Brain?
- Polly** No, no, that came in third. *(Basil makes flying movements, then points at Sybil)* Fishwife.
- Sybil** What?
- Polly** No, no, not fishwife. *(Basil points at Sybil, then at his fly)*
- Polly** Small . . . fly! Flying. . . Flying Tart. . . no, no. . . *(Basil repeats his Sybil-making-toast mime)* No, it got off to a flying start, and its name was *(with relief)* Dragonfly.
- In the lobby.*
- Sybil** *(In the dining room)* Thank you, Polly. *(she goes into the lobby and turns on Basil)* If I find out the money on that horse was yours, you know what I'll do, Basil. *(she exits upstairs)*
- Basil** *(calling after her)* You'll have to sew 'em back on first. *(the Major appears, heading for the bar; Basil has an inspiration)* Major!
- The Major** *(without checking his stride)* Six o'clock, old boy.
He goes towards the bar. Basil follows him.
- Basil** Oh, so it is, Major. Can I offer you . . .
- The Major** Oh, that's very decent of you. Just a quick one, going to a memorial service.
- Basil** Tie's a bit bright, isn't it, Major?
- The Major** What?
- Basil** For a memorial service?
- The Major** Oh, I didn't like the chap. One of those. Know what I mean?
- Basil** Major . . . could you do me a favour?
- The Major** Well, I'm a bit short myself, old boy.

Basil No, no, no, could you look after some money for me. *(he takes it out)* I won it on that horse, only Sybil's a bit suspicious you see, and she goes through my pockets some nights . . .

The Major Oh, absolutely. Which horse?

Basil . . . Dragonfly. *(gives the Major the money)*

The Major When's it running?

Basil No, no. It ran today. I won that on it.

The Major Oh! *(starts to give the money back)* Well done, old boy.

Basil No, no, could you keep it.

The Major Oh, no, no, I couldn't do that. No, it's very decent of you.

Basil No, no, could you keep it just for tonight. It's Sybil, you see. Secret?

The Major Ah. Present.

Basil Sort of, yes. Don't mention it.

The Major Mum's the word.

Basil I'll get it from you in the morning and bank it.

The Major Understood, old boy. Cheers.

The Major strides off into the bar. Basil, very pleased with himself, follows him.

FADE

FADE UP TO:

The lobby, the next morning. Basil is at reception making out Mr Mackintosh's bill.

Basil There you are, Mr Mackintosh. *(gives him the bill)*

The Misses Tibbs and Gatsby appear at the foot of the stairs.

Misses Tibbs & Gatsby Good morning, Mr Fawltly.

Basil Good morning, ladies. *(the phone rings and he answers it)* Hallo. Fawltly Towers.

Mrs Richards *(off; loudly)* Watt!

Basil *(seeing Mrs Richard bearing down on him)* . . . I didn't say anything. *(to phone)* Yes?

Mrs Richards Have you called the police yet?

Basil Er, excuse me, I'm just trying to take a telephone call.

Mrs Richards Have you called them yet?

Basil *(about to say no, but changes his mind)* . . . Yes. Yes, we have.

Mrs Richards Well, when are they going to be here?

- Basil** As soon as possible. They're very busy today.
- Mrs Richards** Busy. Tch. *(she moves off)*
- Basil** There was a lot of bloodshed at the Nell Gwynn tea-rooms last night. *(to phone)* Hello . . . yes, certainly, yes . . . *(calling after Mrs Richards)* Mrs Richards! Mrs Richards!!! *(Mr Mackintosh jumps)* Sorry, sorry. . . *(to Mrs Richards as she returns)* Telephone for you. Here. *(she takes the phone; Mackintosh points at his bill)* Yes?
- Mackintosh** What's this for?
- Basil** Er . . . telephone calls?
- Mackintosh** But I haven't made any.
- Basil** Oh. Er . . . cigarettes?
- Mackintosh** I don't smoke.
- Mrs Richards** *(to phone)* Hallo!! *(to Basil)* There's nobody there.
- Basil** *(taking the phone)* Hallo . . . yes, yes, I know she is. Yes . . . *(to Mrs Richards)* It's your sister. *(Mrs Richards grabs the phone)*
- Mackintosh** Well, what is it for?
- Basil** Drinks?
- Mackintosh** Drinks - me?
- Mrs Richards** *(to phone)* Hallo. Hallo. We've been cut off.
- Basil** *(gabbing the phone)* Hallo . . . look, you tell me, and I'll tell her . . .
- Mrs Richards** *(to Mackintosh)* Even the phones don't work.
- Basil** Your sister says you've had an offer of eighty-seven thousand pounds for your house in Brighton.
- Mrs Richards** Eighty-seven? Give it to me. *(grabbing the phone back)* Don't be a fool, Stephanie. Nine two seven fifty I said and I'm not taking a penny less, you tell him that. *(slams the phone down)* Why don't people listen? *(heads off towards dining room)*
- Mackintosh** Well?
- Basil** Well, let's scrub that 32p then, shall we? Let's enjoy ourselves. There.
- Mackintosh** Oh, thank you very much.
- Mr Mackintosh writes out the cheque. The Major appears from the dining room.*
- Basil** Ah! Major! *(hurries from behind the desk and catches the Major)* Major. . . can I have it now?
- The Major** What, old boy?
- Basil** The money. . . the money I gave you last night.
- The Major** What is all this, Fawlty?

- Basil** You remember. . . I gave you some money last night. Just before you went to that remembrance service.
- The Major** Remembrance service?
- Basil** Yes.
- The Major** I don't remember that, old boy.
- Basil** It was for . . . a chap you didn't like. Um . . . you know . . . he was one of those.
- The Major** One of those what?
- Basil** Well. . .
- The Major** Pansy?
- Basil** Yes.
- The Major** *(indicating the dining room)* Which one?
- Basil** No, no. Look, you were in your best suit.
- The Major** Was I? Oh yes, of course - I went to the theatre, of course.
- Basil** No, no.
- The Major** Yes, with Winnie Atwell.
- Basil** Winnie Atwell?
- The Major** Well, Marjorie Atwell, Marjorie . . . I always call her Winnie 'cos she looks like Winnie.
- Basil** . . . She's not black.
- The Major** Black? Churchill wasn't black.
- Basil** Look, look, I gave you seventy-five pounds - you put it in there . . . *(indicates the Major's pocket)*
- The dining-room door flies open and Mrs Richards strides out and up to Basil. The Major wanders off upstairs.*
- Mrs Richards** What do you mean by telling me you called the police?
- Basil** I . . .
- Mrs Richards** You've done no such thing. Your wife's just told me you're still searching the rooms.
- Basil** Well, I thought she'd called them.
- Mrs Richards** You lying hound!
- Sybil** *(coming in from the dining room)* Mrs Richards . . .
- Mrs Richards** *(to Basil)* Go and call them now. Immediately.
- Basil** Yes, but look. . .
- Sybil** Mrs Richards, we will, the moment we've searched the...

- Mrs Richards** Right. I shall call them myself, then. *(she makes for the reception desk, followed by Sybil)*
- Sybil** Couldn't we just wait until . . .
- Mrs Richards** I've never seen such a place. *(picks up the phone)*
- Sybil** *(intercepting her)* All right, Mrs Richards. Would you like to use the office phone?
- Mrs Richards** What?
- Sybil** In here. Thank you. *(shows her into the office, and calls back to Basil)* Basil. Get the key and check her room. *(goes into the office)*
- Basil** Right. *(gets the key)*
- The Major** *(appearing at the foot of the stairs holding a wad of notes)* I've found it, Fawlty!
- Basil** What?
- The Major** It was in my pocket.
- Basil** Ah! *(glances furtively toward the office)*
- The Major** Yes, in my new suit. In there. *(puts the notes into his inside pocket)* See?
- Basil** *(trying to regain the money)* That's marvellous, Major.
- The Major** Stuffed right down.
- Basil** Yes, can I. . .
- The Major** I don't know how it got there.
- Basil** No, can I. . .
- The Major** I always make a point of keeping my money in my hip pocket.
- Basil** Please! Please!
- The Major** What, old boy?
- Basil** Can I have it?
- The Major** Oh! Yes, yes, the money. . . yes, of course . . . *(reaches into his back pocket)* Oh! *(pokes about inside the pocket)* Good God, it's gone.
- Basil** No, no - you put it in there.
- Sybil** *(appearing at the office door)* Basil!
- The Major** *(finding it)* Here it is! *(produces the money and holds it out)*
- Sybil** What's that?
- The Major** I found it, Mrs Fawlty. The money.
- Sybil** Oh, that's marvellous. Mrs Richards!!
- Mrs Richards** *(from the office)* What?
- Sybil** We've found your money.
- Mrs Richards emerges from the office.*

- Basil** *(frozen with horror)* Er . . . no!
- Sybil** The Major's found your money.
- Basil** No dear.
- Sybil** What? *(takes the money)* Thank you, Major. *(gives it to Mrs Richards)* You see, I knew it'd turn up.
- Mrs Richards looks at it suspiciously and starts to count it.*
- Basil** *(whimpering unintelligibly)* Er . . . er . . .
- Sybil** What is it, Basil?
- But he can't think of anything to say. Mrs Richards continues to count.*
- The Major** Bit of luck, eh, Fawltly!
- Mrs Richards** It's ten pounds short.
- Sybil** Oh dear.
- Basil** *(dramatically)* It's not!! Ten pounds! Oh my God!! Don't worry, we'll have a whip-round! *(grabs the blind box and shakes it frantically, upside down)*
- Sybil** Basil!! Stop it!!
- Mrs Richards** What's he doing now?
- Basil is still shaking the box. Sybil stares at him for a moment and then throws a cup of coffee in his face. He freezes.*
- Sybil** What on earth do you think you're doing? *(to Mrs Richards)* I'll look for the other ten immediately, Mrs Richards. *(to the Major)* Where exactly did you find it, Major?
- The Major** In my pocket.
- Sybil** In your pocket?
- The Major** Yes, yes, not this suit - the new one.
- Sybil** Would you mind if I just popped up and had a look?
- The Major** Oh, not at all, not at all.
- Sybil** *(to Mrs Richards)* I'll see if I can find it. Won't be a moment.
- The Major** It's in with the . . . er . . . *(he can't remember)*
- Sybil disappears up the stairs.*
- Basil** *(to Mrs Richards)* Excuse me . . .
- Mrs Richards** *(to the Major)* Did you say it was in your pocket?
- The Major** Yes.
- Basil** Mrs Richards, can I . . .

- Mrs Richards** What was it doing in your pocket?
- Basil** Can I explain . . .
- Mrs Richards** You're not explaining anything. You're completely loopy. Mad as a March hare.
- Basil** Yes. Yes, I am. Yes, I am completely loopy. That's why I gave him the money to look after.
- Mrs Richards** What?
- Basil** You see, there's been a mistake. The money there is in fact mine.
- Mrs Richards** Yours?
- Basil** Yes. As the Major will confirm. I've been saving it up for a present for my wife, right, and that's why I couldn't say anything just now but I gave it to the Major last night.
- Mrs Richards** What rubbish. This is my money.
- Basil** No, no, well the Major will verify what I've said.
- The Major** Hmmmm?
- Basil** Could you verify that, Major?
- The Major** What, old boy?
- Basil** The money I gave you last night, you know, for my wife's present. . . You remember I gave it to you just before you went to the theatre.
- The Major** Theatre!?
- Basil** Yes. You remember. *(whispering)* That money I won on the horse.
- The Major** A horse.
- Mrs Richards** Why are you whispering? What are you saying?
- The Major** He says he won it on a horse.
- Mrs Richards** *(loudly)* Won it on a horse!
- Basil** Ssssh. Doesn't matter. *(to the Major)* Do you remember me giving it to you? *(the Major thinks)* Think. Please think.
- Pause*
- The Major** . . . What was the question again?
- Basil** The money! The money!! Do you remember?. . . *(sees Manuel emerging from the dining room)* Manuel. Manuel. Come here. Manuel. . . you remember I had some money yesterday. *(Manuel looks suspicious; Basil whispers)* The money I won on the horse.
- Manuel** Ah! Si. . .
- Basil** Tell Mrs Richards. Tell her I had the money yesterday.
- Manuel** *(with pride)* Ahem. I know nothing.

- Basil** What?
- Manuel** I know nothing.
- Basil** No, no.
- Manuel** Nothing.
- Basil** No, no, forget that.
- Manuel** I forget everything. I know nothing.
- Basil** No, you can tell her. You can tell her.
- Manuel** No I cannot.
- Basil** Yes, yes, tell her, tell her, please, please, tell her, tell her . . . I'll kill you if you don't.
- Manuel** *(runs his finger along his throat and winks at Basil)* No, I know nothing. *(to Mrs Richards)* I am from Barcelona. *(he leaves)*
- Mrs Richards** I'm not listening to any more of this rubbish. I'm going to finish my breakfast. When I come back I want the rest of the money. *(she steams off into the dining room)*
- Sybil** *(coming down the stairs)* Give it to her, Basil.
- Basil** What?
- Sybil** I can't find it. Give her ten from the till. . . .
- Basil** Right. *(he opens the till by banging it with his head and takes ten pounds out)* Ten pounds. *(he slaps it down on the counter and starts taking his shirt off)*
- Sybil** What are you doing?
- Basil** I'm going to give her the shirt off my back too.
- Manuel** *(poking his head out of the kitchen)* You see, I know nothing.
- Basil** I'm going to sell you to a vivisectionist. *(Manuel disappears; the Major wanders off; Sybil exits; Basil finishes folding his shirt)* There. Now. . .
- He stands for a moment, then starts to wail. Mr Kerr comes in through the main door, carrying a large cardboard box containing a vase.*
- Kerr** Good afternoon, Mr Fawlty.
- Basil** *(in between sobs)* Good afternoon.
- Kerr** You got a Mrs Richards staying with you?
- Basil** *(falls out of sight behind the desk; he reappears)* Yes.
- Kerr** Ah. Only she bought this ornate vase yesterday, asked us to deliver it. The thing is . . . *(takes a glove out of his pocket)* she left some money behind. Keeps it in this, ninety-five quid . . . look. *(Basil looks)* The cleaner found it this morning, almost threw it in the bin, lucky, eh? *(Basil is transfixed)* . . . Is she around?
- Basil** . . . Nope. I'll give it to her.

- Kerr** *(giving it to him)* Oh, thanks, Mr Fawlty. Goodbye.
He goes out, leaving the box on the desk.
- Polly enters. Basil looks at the money and blows a kiss to God*
- Basil** We found her money!
- Polly** Where?
- Basil** . . . She left it. . . it doesn't matter. . . I'm ten pounds up on the deal.
- Polly** Ten pounds up?
- Basil** Yes - even if I give her ten - I'm still up . . . Polly. . . for the first time in my life I'm ahead! I'm winning! Ah ha! *(sees Mrs Richards approaching; gleefully)* Hallo, Mrs Richards. How lovely to see you. Your beautiful vase that you bought yesterday has just arrived. Now, remind me, that money you had, was it yours or mine?
- Mrs Richards** I told you, it's mine.
- Basil** You're absolutely sure?
- Mrs Richards** Yes, I am.
- Basil** But you're still ten pounds short. *(pulls out the wad of notes he has received and peels one off)* Polly, give Mrs Richards this, would you?
- Mrs Richards** *(sensing something)* What's that?
- Basil** This is mine. *(he flourishes it)*
- Mrs Richards stares undecided. Basil beams.*
- Sybil appears behind him and looks at the wad.*
- Sybil** What's that, Basil?
- Basil jumps but cannot think of an answer.*
- Polly** It's mine.
- Sybil** What?
- Polly** It's the money I won on the horse.
- Basil** That's right, dear. Polly asked me to put it in the safe for her. So . . . that's all sorted out . . . and this is your money, Polly. . . this is your beautiful vase, Mrs Richards.
- Still holding the money in his right hand, he picks up the cardboard box carefully with his left and holds it out to her.*
- The Major sails into view, quite excited.*
- The Major** Fawlty . . . you did give me that money! You won it on that horse!

Basil is horrified. Sybil grabs the money; he clutches at it with his left hand, dropping the box.

We hear the crash as the vase shatters. He screams.

Mrs Richards That cost seventy-five pounds.

Sybil Oh, I am sorry, Mrs Richards. We must pay you back for it.

She counts out the money for Mrs Richards. Basil despairs.

FADE AND END MUSIC

CURTAIN

The Hotel Inspectors

Basil Fawlty

Sybil Fawlty

Manuel

Polly

Major Gowen

Miss Tibbs

Miss Gatsby

Mr Hutchison

Mr Walt

1st Inspector

2nd Inspector

3rd Inspector

Morning at Fawlty Towers. In the office, Basil is reading a newspaper: At the reception desk, Sybil is on the phone. She laughs - machine-gun plus seal bark.

Sybil . . . I know. . . well, it all started with that electrician, didn't it . . . a real live wire he was, only one watt but plenty of volts as they say . . .

She laughs again. The noise rattles Basil, who puts a cigarette in his mouth and looks in vain for a match.

Sybil . . . Well, anything in trousers, yes . . . or out of them, preferably. *(she laughs)* Yes . . . um . . . no, just lighting up, go on . . . I know, I'd heard that, with her mother in the same room.

Basil comes out and takes the matches; she takes them back from him and gives him just one. Basil is disgruntled but spots a guest coming and slips smartly back into the office.

Sybil No, no, of course I won't, go on. *(the new arrival, Mr Hutchison, stops at the desk; Sybil sees him)* Basil!

Basil *(in the office)* Yes, dear?

Sybil Oh no! . . . Who saw them? . . . Basil!

Basil *(trying to strike his match on the desk)* Yes, dear?

Sybil Could you come and attend to a gentleman out here, dear? *(to phone)* ineteen?

Basil What, you mean out where you are, dear?

Sybil Well, the last one was only twenty-two . . . he was!

Basil Actually, I'm quite busy in here, dear . . . are you very busy out there?

Sybil I'm on the telephone, Basil. *(to Mr Hutchison)* My husband will be with you in a moment. Thank you.

Basil So I'll stop work and come and help out there, shall I?

Sybil No, no, no, the Maltese one.

Basil Well, I'm glad that's settled, then. *(comes to the reception desk reluctantly)*

Sybil No, no, dear, he was an Arab.

Basil Darling, when you've finished, why don't you have a nice lie-down? *(to Mr Hutchison)* I'm so sorry to have kept you waiting, sir. I had no idea my wife was so busy.

Hutchinson Fear not, kind sir, it matters not one whit.

Basil . . . I beg your pardon?

Hutchison *(loudly)* It matters not one whit, time is not pressing on me fortunately. Now some information please. This afternoon I have to visit the town for sundry purposes which would be of no interest to you I am quite sure, but nevertheless I shall require your aid in getting for me some sort of transport, some hired vehicle, that is, to get me to my first port of call.

- Basil** Are you all right?
- Hutchison** Oh, yes, I find the air here most invigorating.
- Basil** I see . . . Well, did I gather from your first announcement that you want a taxi?
- Hutchison** In a nutshell.
- Basil** *(turning away)* Case more like. *(he picks up a minicab card; Sybil finishes her call and goes into the office)*
- Hutchison** At two o'clock, please.
- Basil** *(giving him the card)* Well, there's the number of the local firm.
- Hutchison** Please, please - could you get it for me, because I never use the telephone if I can avoid it.
- Basil** Why not?
- Hutchison** The risk of infection . . . Now. I have a rendezvous at five o'clock at this address which I must reach from the Post Office in Queen's Square, so as the map is sadly inadequate I would be very grateful if you could draw me a diagram of the optimum route?
- Basil** May I ask what's wrong with the map?
- Hutchison** It's got curry on it.
- Basil** . . . Look it's perfectly simple, you go to the end of Queen's Parade, bear left . . . *(Hutchison rudely waves the pen and paper in Basil's face)* . . . Look, just listen.
- Hutchison** No, I just want a diagram.
- Basil** It really is very simple.
- Hutchison** Well, I'd rather have the diagram if it doesn't put you out.
- Basil** It does put me out.
- Hutchison** Well, I'd like it all the same!
- Sybil** *(who has come back from the office)* Basil!!!
- Basil** *(through clenched teeth)* . . . Right. *(he looks round for paper and pen)*
- Hutchison** *(brandishing his pen at Basil)* Here we are, then.
- Basil** We do have pens, thank you.
- Hutchison** What?
- Basil** We have actually got pens in the hotel, thank you so much . . . *(looks around vainly)* Somewhere . . . I mean, where are the pens . . . ? I mean, would you believe it?
- As Basil looks around, Mr Walt, a smoothish-looking gentleman in his mid-forties, arrives at the desk; Sybil starts checking him in.*
- Basil** I mean, there are no pens here! *(to Mr Walt)* I mean, this is supposed to be a hotel.

Sybil is holding out a cardboard box which she has just picked Up from the desk. She shakes it. It rattles.

- Basil** . . . Well, what are they doing in there?
I put them there.
- Basil** Why?
- Sybil** Just sign there, Mr Walt. *(to Basil)* Because you're always losing them, Basil.
- Basil** I am not always losing them. People take them.
- Sybil** Well, they don't take them from me.
- Basil** They wouldn't dare . . . *(takes a pen and starts drawing the diagram, muttering)*
Well, I'm sorry I didn't guess that you'd suddenly done that after twelve years, dear. I'm afraid my psychic powers must be a little bit below par this morning.
(pushing the diagram at Hutchison) There we are.
- Sybil** Don't be silly, Basil. It's written quite clearly on the top of the box. *(she gets Mr Walt's key)*
- Basil** *(staring)* . . . 'Pens'? . . . It looks more like 'Bens' to me.
- Sybil** Well, when Ben comes you can give it to him. Mr Walt's in room seven.
- Basil** *(to Walt)* What do you think? Doesn't that look like 'Bens' to you?
- Walt** . . . Not really.
- Basil** Well, it does to me. Look, that's a 'P' . . .
- Hutchison** *(studying his diagram)* I don't understand this, where is the Post Office?
- Basil** It's there, where it says 'Post Office'. I'm sorry if it is confusing.
- Hutchison** Oh. 'P.Off.' You've used the abbreviation.
- Basil** Ah, the penny's dropped.
- Hutchison** Well, I thought it said Boff.
- Basil** Of course.
- Hutchison** Yes. I thought Boff was the name of a locale . . . you know, the name of a district. That 'P' looks like a 'B', you see.
- Basil** No it doesn't.
- Hutchison** Yes it does . . . there's a little loop on the bottom of it . . .
- Basil** *(taking the diagram and showing it to Walt)* Excuse me - would you say that was a 'P' or a 'B'?
- Walt** . . . Er . . .
- Basil** There. Does it say 'Boff' or does it say 'Poff'?
- Walt** . . . Er . . .
- Basil** There! There! It's a 'P'. isn't it?

Walt *(unwillingly)* I suppose so. . .

Basil P. Off.

Walt . . . I beg your pardon?

Basil P. Off. Not B. Off. Whoever heard of a Bost Office?

Manuel arrives.

Basil *(to Walt)* Nine?

Walt What?

Basil Room nine?

Walt Room seven.

Basil Manuel, would you take these cases to room seven, please.

Manuel *Que?*

Basil takes some cards from below the desk. He shows Manuel a drawing of a suitcase.

Basil *(to Walt, indicating Hutchison)* He thinks Boff is a locale . . .

Walt He thinks what?

Basil *(showing Manuel a vertical arrow)* You know, some zone, some province . . . in equatorial Torquay.

Basil shows Manuel a number '7'; Manuel holds up a card saying 'OK?'

Basil *(to Walt)* Manuel will show you to your room . . . if you're lucky.

Manuel takes Walt's cases and scurries upstairs; Walt follows.

Hutchison Excuse me, excuse me - in how many minutes does luncheon commence, please?

Basil Here, I'll write it down for you.

Hutchison You won't forget the taxi, will you . . . two o'clock. And if anybody wants me, I shall be in the lounge.

Basil . . . If anybody wants you?

Hutchinson I'll be in the lounge. *(goes into bar)*

Basil *(calling after him)* Anyone in particular? . . . I mean, Henry Kissinger? . . . or just anyone with a big net? *(goes into the office, where Sybil sits filing her nails)* I don't know what it is about this place . . . I mean, some of the people we get here . . .

Sybil What are you on about?

Basil I wish you'd . . . help a bit. You're always . . . refurbishing yourself.

Sybil What?

- Basil** Oh . . . never mind! Never mind!!
- Sybil** Don't shout at me. I've had a difficult morning.
- Basil** Oh dear, what happened? Did you get entangled in the eiderdown again? . . . Not enough cream in your éclair? Hmmm? Or did you have to talk to all your friends for so long that you didn't have time to perm your ears?
- Sybil** Actually, Basil, I've been working.
- Basil** Choh!
- Sybil** You know what I mean by 'working', don't you, dear? I mean getting things done, as opposed to squabbling with the guests.
- Basil** I would find it a little easier to cope with some of the cretins we get in here, my little nest of vipers, if I got a smidgeon of co-operation from you.
- Sybil** Co-operation - that's a laugh. The day you co-operate you'll be in a wooden box. I've never heard such rudeness.
- Basil** Look, if you think I'm going to fawn to some of the yobboes we get in here . . .
- Sybil** This is a hotel, Basil, not a Borstal, and it might help business if you could have a little more courtesy, just a little.
- Basil** I suppose talking to Audrey for half an hour helps business, does it?
- Sybil** It was about business for your information. Audrey has some news that may interest you.
- Basil** Oh, really - this'll be good. Let me guess . . . The Mayor wears a toupee? Somebody's got nail varnish on their cats? Am I getting warm? . . .
- Sybil** There are some hotel inspectors in town. *(she exits into the lobby)*
- Basil is stunned. After a moment he runs into the lobby after her.*
- Basil** What? What does she know?
- Sybil** That's all she knows.
- Basil** How does she know?
- Sybil** *(calmly)* A friend of Bill Morton's overheard three men in a pub last night comparing notes on places they'd just been in Exeter.
- Basil** Three men!?! . . . I'll call Bill.
- Sybil** You don't have to call Bill, Basil. Just try and exercise a little courtesy.
- She exits into the kitchen. Basil picks up the phone on the reception desk and is dialling when the Major comes in from the bar.*
- The Major** Papers arrived yet, Fawlty?
- Basil** No, not yet. . . not yet, Major, sorry, sorry . . .

The Major exits. Basil sees Hutchison approaching again. He pretends not to and starts dialling again. Hutchison, ignored, starts ringing the bell insistently.

Hutchison Could you do that in a moment, please?

Basil I'm on the telephone.

Hutchison Well, you haven't finished dialling yet, have you? *(he puts his finger on the receiver rest, cutting Basil off; Basil slams the receiver down; Hutchison gets his finger away just in time)*

Hutchison Now listen. . . there is a documentary tonight on BBC2 on Squawking Bird, the leader of the Blackfoot Indians in the late 1860s. Now this commences at eight forty-five and goes on for approximately three-quarters of an hour.

Basil I'm sorry, are you talking to me?

Hutchison Indeed I am, yes. Now, is it possible for me to reserve the BBC2 channel for the duration of this televisual feast?

Basil Why don't you talk properly?

Hutchison I beg your pardon?

Basil No, it isn't.

Hutchison What?

Basil It is not possible to reserve the BBC2 channel from the commencement of this televisual feast until the moment of the termination of its ending. Thank you so much. *(he starts to re-dial, but Hutchison puts his finger on the rest again)*

Hutchison Well, in that case, may I suggest you introduce such a scheme?

Basil No. *(he brings the receiver down hard, missing the finger by a whisker)*

Hutchison I'd just like to tell you that I have a wide experience of hotels and many of those of my acquaintance have had the foresight to introduce this facility for the benefit of their guests.

Basil *(unimpressed)* Oh, I see, you have had a wide experience of hotels, have you?

Hutchison Yes, in my professional activities I am in constant contact with them.

Basil *(dialling again)* Are you. Are you really. *(he stops; he has registered a potential connection between Hutchison and 'hotel inspector')*

Hutchison Well, then, is it possible for me to hire a television to watch the programme in the privacy of my own room?

Basil *(playing for time)* . . . I beg your pardon?

Hutchison Have you the facility to hire a television set to one of your guests?

Basil Er . . . good point. I'm glad you asked me that. Not. . . as such.

Hutchison Oh.

Basil However, we do plan to introduce such a scheme in the near future.

Hutchison Well, that's not much use to me tonight, is it?

- Basil** No, but . . . I'll tell you what. Why don't I introduce another scheme straight away, along the lines that you've already suggested, by which I reserve the BBC2 channel for you tonight.
- Hutchison** Now that's more like it.
- Basil** Not at all. I mean, that's what we're here for, isn't it.
- Hutchison** Yes. . .
- Basil** Is there anything else, before I call your taxi?
- Hutchison** Well, yes, there is. Someone in there mentioned that you have a table-tennis table.
- Basil** Indeed we do. It is not . . . in absolutely mint condition. But it certainly could be used in an emergency.
- Hutchison** Ah.
- Basil** It is to be found in the South Wing, overlooking the courtyard, where there is of course ample parking.
- Hutchison** What?
- Polly has entered through the main door.*
- Basil** Ah, Polly!
- Polly** Yes, Mr Fawlty?
- Basil** Mr Hutchison, may I introduce Polly Shearman, who is with us at the moment.
- Polly** Oh. . . how do you do?
- Hutchison** How do you do. Wait a minute. We've met before, I think.
- Polly** Yes, I served you at breakfast.
- Hutchison** Oh yes. *(waving his finger at her)* And you spilt the grapefruit juice, didn't you, you naughty girl?
- Polly** *(charmingly)* And you moved the glass, didn't you?
- Basil** *(quickly)* Thank you, Polly. *(she moves off)* Awfully nice girl. Very bright. She's a fully qualified painter, you know.
- Hutchison** Oh, really?
- Miss Tibbs and Miss Gatsby come down the stairs.*
- Basil** Ah, good morning. . . good morning, ladies.
- Miss Tibbs & Miss Gatsby** Good morning, Mr Fawlty.
- Basil** *(to Hutchison)* We do like to have girls of that calibre to help us out, it does add a certain . . . Well, would you care to partake of lunch now? *(he moves round to usher Hutchison into the dining room)*
- Hutchison** Surely it's not yet . . .

Basil Oh, goodness, we don't worry about things like that here. No fear - I mean, this is a hotel, not a Borstal!

He ushers Hutchison into the dining room. Sybil appears.

Basil *(at the dining-room door)* Yes, dear?

Sybil It's not half past yet.

Basil I was just saying to Mr Hutchison, dear, this is a hotel not a Borstal, ha ha ha. *(he mouths the word 'inspector' at her)*

Sybil Chef won't be ready, Basil.

Basil Leave it to me, dear, leave it to me.

Sybil Did you ring Bill?

Basil No, dear, not necessary. *(still signalling)*

Sybil What?

Basil Explain later. *(wink)* But I must look after Mr Hutchison now. *(mouths 'inspector' again)*

In the dining room, Polly is taking Hutchison's order.

Polly A Spanish omelette.

Hutchison *(loudly)* And all on the plate, please, none on the tablecloth.

Polly . . . Er, excuse me, you're not by any chance the Duke of Kent, are you?

Hutchison No, no . . . oh no. You've got the wrong person there.

Basil *(bustling up)* Ah, Mr Hutchison! You've ordered, have you?

Hutchison Oh yes, I'm going to have your Spanish omelette.

Basil Splendid.

Hutchison Yes - I assume that all the vegetables within the omelette are fresh?

Basil Oh, yes, yes.

Hutchison Including the peas?

Basil Oh yes, they're fresh all right.

Hutchison They're not frozen, are they?

Basil . . . Well, they're frozen, yes.

Hutchison Well, if they're frozen, they're not fresh, are they.

Basil Well, I assure you they were absolutely fresh when they were frozen.

Hutchison Oh dear - there's a lot of this nowadays in hotels.

Basil A lot of what?

Hutchison Yes, I'll just have cheese salad, please.

- Basil** What?
- Hutchison** I eat only fresh vegetables, you see - I'll just have the cheese salad.
- Basil** Well, we could do the omelette without the peas.
- Hutchison** Oh, no, I always feel that the peas are an integral part of the overall flavour - might I suggest that in future you avail yourself of sufficient quantities of the fresh article?
- Basil** . . . Now look! We've been serving. . . *(recovers himself)* Yes, yes, good idea . . . now, something to drink?
- Hutchison** Yes, I'll have a ginger beer, please.
- Basil** A ginger beer?
- Hutchison** Yes, and a glass of fresh water.
- The phone rings in the lobby. Sybil answers it.*
- Basil** . . . Fresh?
- Hutchison** Water, yes.
- Sybil** *(putting her head round the door)* Mr Hutchison – a telephone call for you at reception.
- Hutchison** Telephone? . . . Oh dear . . . oh dear. . . *(he takes out a clean handkerchief and exits to reception)*
- Basil** *(to himself)* . . . Clever. . . clever . . .
- Basil goes into the kitchen. Mr Walt enters from the lobby and looks around, wondering where he should sit.*
- Walt** *(to Manuel, who is busily putting napkins on tables)* Good afternoon.
- Manuel** No, is no sun. Is no good for me.
- Walt** I beg your pardon?
- Manuel** I homesick, yes?
- Walt** Is there anywhere you'd like me to sit?
- Manuel** *Que?*
- Walt** I'm in room seven.
- Manuel** *(ushering Walt to door and pointing up the stairs)* Oh yes please, here . . . you go up . . . room seven.
- Walt** No, no.
- Manuel** Yes, please, I show you.
- Walt** No, look, I want a table.
- Manuel** A table?

Walt For one.

Manuel Ah! Table one. Oh, please - yes, table one - so sorry. (*indicates a table*)

Walt . . . Thank you.

Manuel helps Walt to sit, then gets a menu and a piece of card. He gives Walt the menu.

Manuel So sorry, but I think you say for room and I do it for I am myself not want to know it easily.

Walt I'm sorry?

Manuel No. Is my fault.

Walt Well, I'll try the pâté . . . and the lamb casserole.

Manuel (*looking at the card*) You . . . room ten?

Walt No. Room seven.

Manuel Seven? *Si*.

Walt Yes.

Manuel No, no, this is table one. Is Wednesday. Room seven is table five. Please. (*Walt moves patiently to Mr Hutchison's table*) So sorry. . . seven is what I think you say but one is for table not for this one so is *come se habla en Ingles pero puedo ver las nombres solamente quando estan delante de mi*.

Walt (stoically) The pâté and the lamb.

Manuel *Si. Pâté . . . Lamb . . . (he exits muttering into the kitchen)*

Basil (coming in and delivering the ginger beer and the glass of water down in front of Walt) One ginger beer . . . and one glass of fresh water. (he looks at Walt and jumps violently) What are you doing there?

Walt . . . I . . .

Basil You can't sit there, it's taken. Come on.

Walt Look, I've been moved once already.

Basil Well, you're in room seven, aren't you?

Walt Yes, but the waiter said table five.

Basil Well, this isn't table five, is it? (*sees the plastic table number; it says 'Five'*) Tch. (*picks it up and moves to another table*) Would you come over here, please, this is table five. (*puts the 'Five' down on the new table, takes an 'Eight' off and pockets it*) . . . Come on!

Walt Look, I did ask the waiter.

Basil Well, he's hopeless, isn't he. You might as well ask the cat. Now, settle down, come on, come on.

Walt . . . I beg your pardon?

- Basil** Would you sit down please? *(Walt resignedly sits)* Thank you. *(moves off)*
- Walt** I hate to trespass further on your valuable time, but might I look at the wine list?
- Basil** Now?
- Walt** Yes, please.
- Basil** *(removing the Major's wine list from his grasp)* Excuse me . . . *(gives it to Walt)*
Here we are. Are you happy now?
- Walt** Could I have an ashtray, please? *(Basil produces an ashtray)* Thank you - I'll have a bottle of the Aloxe-Corton '65.
- Basil** The what?
- Walt** *(showing him)* The Aloxe-Corton '65.
- Basil** *(registering the price)* Oh! The Cortonne. Yes, of course, my pleasure. *(he returns the wine list to the Major; Hutchison re-enters, wiping his ear with his handkerchief)* Ah, there you are, Mr Hutchison! Nice to have you back again. *(fawns after him)*
- Hutchinson** Not so close, please, not so close.
- Basil** Oh, sorry. . . everything to your satisfaction?
- Hutchinson** Your earpiece was very greasy - I've wiped it out for you.
- Basil** Oh, thank you so much. *(exits to kitchen)*
- Hutchinson** *(muttering)* Dreadfully greasy, it was . . . I don't know who's been using it. *(tastes his ginger beer)* Oh dear - that's tepid! *(Basil and Polly come in from the kitchen)*
Have you got an ice bucket, please?
- Basil** An ice bucket?
- Hutchinson** This ginger beer is distinctly warm.
- Basil** Ah, Polly - an ice bucket for Mr Hutchison, please. Thank you. *(Polly looks dazed; Basil goes to Walt's table with the bottle)* There we are - the Cortonne '65.

Clearly performing for Hutchison, he inserts the corkscrew with panache and pulls. He struggles, gamely smiles, turns his back, tries again and it comes. Triumphant, he pours. Alas, no wine is forthcoming.
- Basil** Ah . . . a bit still in there. Sorry.

He re-inserts the corkscrew, struggles, and pours again. Nothing happens. He pokes some pieces of cork out and pours. A dribble flows, followed by a torrent. Some goes in the glass.
- Basil** Thank you so much. May I congratulate you on your choice.
- Walt** *(tasting the wine)* Excuse me.
- Basil** Yes?
- Walt** I'm afraid this is corked.

- Basil** I just uncorked it. Didn't you see me?
- Walt** What?
- Basil** *(shows him the cork on the end of the corkscrew)* Look.
- Walt** No, no . . .
- Basil** No, you see, I took it out of the bottle - that's how I managed to get the wine out of the bottle into your glass.
- Walt** I don't mean that. I mean the wine is corked. The wine has reacted with the cork.
- Basil** I'm sorry?
- Walt** The wine has reacted with the cork and gone bad.
- Basil** Gone bad? May I . . . ? *(he tastes the wine and turns into the corner to cover his reaction)* So you don't want it?
- Walt** I'd like a bottle that's not corked.
- Basil** Right! Right! That's cost me, hasn't it? Well never mind - I'll get another bottle. *(he takes the bottle; on his way out, he addresses the guests)* I do hope you're all enjoying your meals. *(no reaction)* I said, 'I do hope you're all enjoying your meals.' *(there is a bit of nodding)*, Thank you, thank you. *(calls to Walt)* Excuse me . . . excuse me!! Table five!
- Walt** . . . Er yes?
- Basil** Are you having the lamb or the mackerel?
- Walt** . . . The lamb.
- Basil** I'll have another one standing by just in case. *(exits con brio)*
- Sybil comes in, looks round for Basil, and exits. Polly comes in from the kitchen, followed by Basil with a fresh bottle.*
- Basil** Let's give this one a go, then, shall we? . . . Polly, would you get Mr Hutchison his main course, please. *(to Hutchison, fawning)* So sorry to keep you waiting, Mr Hutchison. It will be with you in just one moment. Thank you.
- Sybil** *(looking in)* Basil.
- Basil** Yes, dear? *(but she's gone; he leaves the replacement bottle on the sideboard behind Walt and goes into the lobby)*
- Sybil** *(sweetly)* How are you getting along with your hotel inspector?
- Basil** . . . Fine. Fine.
- Sybil** He sells spoons.
- Basil** . . . Sorry?
- Sybil** I listened in on his phone call. He works for a cutlery firm. But he specializes in spoons.
- Basil** You listened in?

- Sybil** Yes.
- Basil** You listened in on a private call to one of our guests?
- Sybil** That's right, Basil.
- Basil** . . . The little rat! I'll get him for that.
- Sybil** Now, Basil . . .
- Basil** Trying that on with me.
- Sybil** Trying what on?
- Basil** Pretending he's a hotel inspector. . . 'Do we hire television sets' . . . 'fresh peas' . . . 'ice buckets' . . .
- Sybil** Basil, it was your mistake. You can't . . .
- Basil** Now, you let me handle this!
- Sybil** Basil!!! This whole inspector business was in your own imagination. It's nothing to do with him. There is no excuse for rudeness, do you understand? . . . Do you understand?
- Basil** Yes!!!
- Sybil** Good. (she turns and walks away)
- Basil, planning revenge, enters the dining room and stalks the sitting Hutchison.*
- The Major** Papers arrived yet, Fawlty?
- Basil** Not yet, Major, no. (he stands behind Hutchison) Spoons, eh?
- Hutchinson** I'm sorry?
- Basil** Sppppppppppppooooooooooooons!
- Hutchinson** I beg your pardon?
- Basil** I understand you're in the spoon trade.
- Hutchinson** Oh! Yes. . .
- Basil** Ah, fascinating! Fascinating. How absorbing for you.
- Hutchinson** Yes, as a matter of fact . . .
- Basil** So much more interesting than being a hotel inspector!
- He leaves. Hutchison is puzzled. Polly arrives and places an omelette in front of him.*
- Hutchinson** What. . . oh, thank you . . . (looks at it) No . . . Miss!! Miss!!
- Polly** Yes?
- Hutchinson** I didn't order that.
- Basil** (from afar) Is there something we can get you, Mr Hutchison? A tea cosy for your pepper pot, perhaps?

- Hutchinson** No, no. *(to Polly)* I changed the order, you see.
- Basil** *(coming up, aggressively)* What seems to be the trouble?
- Polly** Well, I thought Mr Hutchison ordered an omelette, but. . .
- Basil** No, he went off it, Polly, so we-changed the order. It's perfectly simple . . .
- Polly** Well, I'm sorry, but I wasn't told.
- Basil** Well, I told the chef, so he should have told you.
- Polly** Well, he didn't.
- Basil** Well, is that my fault?
- Polly** No, is it mine?
- Hutchinson** No, it's his fault.
- Basil** What?
- Hutchinson** It's the chef's fault.
- Basil** I beg your pardon?
- Hutchinson** Well clearly in a case like this where the order has been changed and the chef's been informed it's obviously his responsibility.
- Basil** You want to run the place?
- Hutchinson** What?
- Basil** You want to come and run the hotel? Right! Mr Hutchison is taking over, Polly, so I'll have the omelette. *(trying to get Hutchison to his feet)* I'm sure with his natural charm and wide experience there'll be no more problems . . .
- Hutchinson** No, no. . .
- Basil** Come on, then, you can't sit about all day, there's lots to be done. *(jiggling Hutchison's chair)* Come on!
- Sybil** *(appearing from the lobby)* What is going on, Basil?
- Basil** Hello, dear!
- Sybil** Well?
- Basil** *(jiggling the chair very slightly)* Is that better, Mr Hutchison?
- Hutchinson** What?
- Basil** Is that better?
- Hutchinson** Thank you, yes . . .
- Basil** Oh good. Well that's sorted out then. Good.
- Sybil** Is there something wrong?
- Hutchinson** Yes, there is, yes . . . I have been given an erroneous dish.
- Sybil** Thank you, Basil, I'll deal with this . . . thank you, Polly . . . *(Basil walks innocently away)* Now, Mr Hutchison.

- Hutchinson** Now, you see, I did order the omelette in the first place, but then I changed my mind.
- Sybil** I see. Well I'll just go in the kitchen and find out what happened.
- Hutchinson** Thank you.
- She heads for the kitchen. Meanwhile Basil is looking at the sideboard; the bottle has gone. He looks round and sees Manuel.*
- Basil** Manuel!
- Manuel** *(running up)* Si?
- Basil** *(indicating sideboard)* The bottle.
- Manuel** Er . . . Yes!
- Basil** Where is it?
- Manuel** *Que?*
- Basil** . . . *donde es . . . ?*
- Manuel** Oh, I take it. *(indicates kitchen)* I take it. I take it.
- Basil** *(beckoning gently)* Come here. *(takes a spoon from the bowl Manuel is carrying)* You're a waste of space. *(raps him on the head with the spoon and hustles him into kitchen)*
- Sybil** *(coming in from the kitchen with some pâté)* There we are, Mr Hutchison.
- Hutchinson** No, no, no! Just a moment, please!
- Sybil** Yes?
- Hutchinson** I did not order that.
- Sybil** You didn't?
- Hutchinson** I did not.
- Sybil** I'm sorry, there's an order for pâté for this table.
- Hutchinson** Oh dear me, things do seem to be going wrong today, don't they.
- Basil** *(coming back with another bottle)* Hallo, Sybil, taking care of things, are you?
- Sybil** Yes, thank you Basil.
- Basil** Good . . . *(to Hutchinson)* Everything all right, then?
- Hutchinson** Well it appears that. . .
- Sybil** We're just sorting it out, thank you Basil.
- Basil** That's funny. . . you didn't order 'pâté maison', did you, Mr Hutchison?
- Hutchinson** No I did not, I ordered . . .
- Basil** Well, I'll leave you to deal with it, dear.

He goes to Mr Walt's table and starts uncorking the bottle. He has done so when he notices another bottle open on the table.

Basil How did you do that?

Walt What?

Basil (*indicating Walt's bottle*) Where did you get it?

Walt Where did I get it?

Basil That's right! I mean, how did you get it?

Walt The waiter opened it for me.

Basil The waiter opened it for you!?!?

Walt . . . Yes!

Manuel, unaware of recent developments, arrives with Walt's pâté

Basil I've told you about him, haven't I!

Manuel starts to leave. Basil jabs him in the rear with the corkscrew. He leaves more rapidly. Meanwhile Polly is delivering a lamb casserole to Mr Hutchison.

Hutchinson Oh, no, no!! For goodness sake . . .

Basil (*running up*) What is it, what is it?!!

Hutchinson I did not order a lamb casserole!

Basil No, he didn't, he did not order one, Polly, so why. . . has. . . he. . . got. . . one?

Polly Because Mrs Fawltly told me to give him one.

Basil I know how she feels.

Polly I've got an order for one for this table.

Basil Who took the order?

Polly (*valiantly*) . . . I don't know.

Basil . . . Manuel!!

Hutchinson I mean, look, how can it be so difficult to get a cheese salad?

Basil . . . You want to run the place?

Hutchinson No, no, I . . .

Basil Right, well shut up then.

Hutchinson I beg your pardon?!

Polly I'll get you a cheese salad, Mr Hutchison.

Basil (*to Polly*) And don't listen to anyone . . . just get him a cheese salad.

Manuel appears.

- Manuel** *Si? (Basil hits him; he retires)*
- Hutchinson** Excuse me!! I've changed my mind . . . *(rising)* I do not want the cheese salad. I wish to cancel it. I am not used to being spoken to like that, Mr Fawlty, and I've no wish to continue my luncheon.
- Basil** *(realising he went a bridge too far)* I do apologize if what I said just now seemed a trifle. . . brusque.
- Hutchinson** Brusque? It was rude, Mr Fawlty. I said . . . rude!
- Basil** Well, I'm deeply sorry if it came over like that. I mean, nothing could have been further from my mind . . .
- Hutchinson** You told me to shut up!
- Polly** *(brilliantly)* No, no. He told me to shut up.
- Hutchinson** *(to Polly)* You what? He said it to me.
- Basil** Ah, no, I was looking at you but I was talking to Polly. *(still looking at Hutchinson)* Wasn't I, Polly?
- Polly** *(straight to Hutchinson)* Oh, yes.
- Basil** *(still to Hutchinson)* Ah! Did you notice then. . . that I was looking at you but talking to her?
- Hutchinson** What?
- Polly** *(looking at Basil)* You see, he was looking at you but talking to me. *(to Basil)* Wasn't he?
- Basil** *(to Polly)* Wasn't I?
- Hutchinson** *(not sure where to look)* What?
- Polly** *(to Hutchinson)* So you weren't being rude, were you Mr Fawlty?
- Basil** *(to Polly)* Absolutely not. You see?
- Hutchinson** *(to Basil)*. . . Me?
- Basil** *(to Hutchinson)* Yes.
- Hutchinson** *(to Basil)* Well, if you say shut up to somebody, that's the one you want to shut up, isn't it?
- Polly** *(to Basil)* Not necessarily.
- Basil** *(to Hutchinson)*. . . I'm sorry, were you talking to me?
- Hutchinson** *(to Basil)* Yes.
- Polly** *(to Basil)* I beg your pardon.
- A pause. Hutchinson has now been successfully confused.*
- Basil** *(to Hutchinson)* There! You see how easily these misunderstandings occur.
- Hutchinson** Er . . . yes, I do . . .

- Basil** So . . . one cheese salad then please, Polly.
- Polly** *(to Basil)* Certainly, Mr Hutchison. *(exits to the kitchen)*
- Basil** And if there's anything else please don't hesitate to ask.
- Hutchinson** *(after looking around for a moment to see if he is being addressed)* Yes, thank you.
- Basil moves away. Manuel creeps up on Walt and removes his empty plate.*
- Walt** *(jumping)* Aaah!
- Basil** *(to Manuel)* What are you doing? *(to Walt)* I'm so sorry. He's from Barcelona. I trust your pâté was satisfactory?
- Walt** Yes, yes, thank you.
- Basil** Oh, good, good. The chef buys it himself, you know.
- Walt** Buys it?
- Basil** Oh, insists on it. I imagine the Cortonne complemented it delightfully.
- Walt** Yes. It's very good.
- Basil** Ah! Excellent.
- Walt** More like a '66 really.
- Basil** Is it?
- Walt** Well, lots of body.
- Basil** *(picking up the bottle and expertly gauging its weight)* Quite right. It's always a pleasure to find someone who appreciates the boudoir of the grape. I'm afraid most of the people we get in here don't know a Bordeaux from a claret.
- Walt** . . . A Bordeaux is a claret.
- Basil** Oh, a Bordeaux is a claret. But they wouldn't know that. You obviously drink a lot. . . wine, I mean. Well, not a lot, a fair amount, the right amount for a connoisseur, I mean, that doesn't mean you're. . . does it, I mean some people drink it by the crate but that's not being a connoisseur, that's just plain sloshed. Oh, a Bordeaux's one of the clarets all right.
- Walt** One?
- Manuel creeps in with Walt's casserole and skulks off*
- Basil** *(swiftly)* You're down here on business, are you?
- Walt** *(dismissively)* Yes.
- Basil** You're not in the wine trade by any chance?
- Walt** No we're not.
- Basil** We're?

- Walt** *(anxious to start on his casserole)* . . . I am down here on business with a couple of colleagues and we are not in the wine trade.
- Basil** Ah, it's just that you're obviously so expert.
- Walt** No . . . I am not expert.
- Basil** Oh, but you are.
- Walt** I'm not.
- Basil** Oh yes you are.
- Walt** I am not an expert!
- Basil** *(suddenly seizing Walt's shoulder)* Three of you?
- Walt** *(astonished)* What?
- Basil** Three . . . three of you?
- Walt** Yes . . . there are three of us . . . well, the other two aren't here. They're staying at another hotel.
- Basil** *(recovering his wits)* Quite! So . . . it's all all right, is it?
- Walt** . . .What?
- Basil** Well, I mean things in general. . . I mean, the wine's really good?
- Walt** Yes.
- Basil** And the pâté was all right?
- Walt** Yes, I said so.
- Basil** And the casserole?
- Walt** I haven't tasted it yet.
- Basil** *(sniffing the casserole admiringly)* Mmmmrn!
- Walt** I've not been given the chance.
- Manuel enters from kitchen and takes the omelette to Hutchinson*
- There is an explosion of complaints from Hutchison.*
- Basil** *(to Walt)* Well, I'll leave you to your meal if I may . . . *bon appétit.* *(he hurtles towards Hutchison)*
- Hutchinson** *(fortissimo)* Oh, no, come on now, this is quite absurd. I'm sorry, but I do not want an omelette!!
- Manuel** *(offering Hutchinson the omelette)* Is nice!
- Hutchinson** I don't want the bloody thing. I've sent it back once!
- Basil** *(whizzing up)* Here, give it to me.
- Hutchinson** I fail to see how this sort of thing can happen!
- Basil** *(tearing up the omelette)* There. I've tom it up. You'll never see it again.

He deposits the remains on the Major's table. The Major gratefully tucks in.

Hutchinson *(still fortissimo)* I told you I wanted a cheese salad.

Polly arrives with it.

Basil Thank you, Polly, one cheese salad, there we are, sir. I'm so glad everything is to your satisfaction.

Hutchinson No it is not! It is absolutely ridiculous! I mean, you are supposed to be running a hotel!

Basil *(admiring the salad)* My, that does look good.

Hutchinson I've had the omelette, a prawn cocktail with a bloody silly name. . .

Basil Look at that cheddar. Delicious!

Hutchinson . . . then I had a plate of stew and then the bloody omelette again!

Basil Can we keep it down a little?

Hutchinson I mean, all I wanted was a cheese salad. It wasn't as though I'd ordered an elephant's ear on a bun, was it!

Basil *(smiling vainly at Walt)* Thank you, thank you so much.

Hutchinson I mean the whole thing is absolutely ridiculous.

Basil *(pushing him back in his chair)* Well, I'm glad we've sorted it all out now.

Hutchinson . . . I mean for a man who's supposed to be running a hotel, your behaviour is totally . . .

Basil laughs genially at the other guests and places a hand across Hutchinson's mouth.

Basil Well, I'm glad everything's to your satisfaction now . . .

Hutchinson *(muffled)* Let me go, let me go . . .

Basil Is there anything else at all I can get you, sir?

Hutchinson *(struggling)* Let me go, I can't breathe!

Basil *(merrily)* Ha ha ha ha ha! *(hissing)* Shut up, then.

Hutchinson I can't breathe!

Basil Shut up and I'll let go.

Hutchinson You told me to shut up again!

Basil Look at that lovely cheese! *(Hutchinson starts threshing about in search of oxygen; Basil tightens his grip and assures the others)* It's all right, he's only choking. *(Hutchinson leaps convulsively; Basil thumps him on the back)* Don't worry. . . bit of cheese went the wrong way. *(more convulsions and thumping; Basil beams and slips in a quick rabbit-punch; Hutchinson slumps with his face in his salad)* Ah, never mind, he's fainted, poor chap. Manuel! *(to Walt)* Poor chap! Bit of cheese!

The Major Yes, please.

In the lobby. Basil and Manuel pick up Hutchison and carry him into the lobby

Sybil What's happened?

Basil He fainted, dear.

Sybil Fainted?

Basil . . . Got a bit of cheese stuck.

They carry Hutchison into the office, followed by Sybil.

In the office.

Sybil . . . Basil, you do not faint from getting a bit of cheese stuck.

Basil Well, I was giving him a bit of a pat on the back and he sort of. . . moved, just as I was . . .

Sybil What have you done, Basil?

Basil Nothing, he just moved as I . . .

Sybil Oh my God! Call the doctor.

Basil Look, I can handle this.

Sybil Call the doctor!

Basil I can handle it!!

Sybil Call the doctor!!

Basil Look, I can handle it. . . right, right, I'll call the doctor, obviously I can't handle it. . .
(he goes into the lobby, muttering)

In the lobby.

Basil I'm just a great stupid sabre-toothed tart so we'll let my husband do it. *(picks up the phone but sees Walt emerging from the dining room)* Ah! . . . I'm so sorry to have left you; I trust you enjoyed your meal?

Walt *(peremptorily)* Yes, yes, thank you. I was wondering. . .

Basil The casserole was really good, was it?

Walt . . . Well, it was adequate.

Basil Oh, quite, yes, exactly, I'm afraid the chef at lunch today is not our regular, but. . . incidentally, I'm sorry about that poor chap choking himself like that.

Walt I was wondering if you had a telephone I might use?

Basil Oh, please, do use this one. *(hands him the receiver)* I don't know how he managed to do it. Ah, here he is. Good. *(Hutchison emerges unsteadily from the office)* Ah, Mr Hutchison! There you are . . . What a frightful shame about that

piece of cheese getting stuck in the old windpipe like that. *(indicating the office)*
Would you like to go in there and discuss it?

Hutchison No, I'd prefer to come in here and discuss it.

Basil *(retreating)* . . . Oh, fine, I'm afraid it's a little bit of a mess . . .

Hutchison comes behind the desk and hits him. Basil disappears below the desk. After a pause he stands up and smiles wanly at Hutchison.

Basil Well, that lie-down seems to have done you some good.

Hutchison hits him again and Basil reels towards Walt's end of the desk. Hutchison hits him twice more.

Basil *(to Walt)* Sorry about this.

Hutchison hits him a couple more times. He flops out of sight.

Hutchison I am not a violent man, Mr Fawlty.

Basil's voice Yes you are.

Hutchison No I'm not! But when I am insulted and then attacked, I would prefer to rely on my own mettle than call the police.

Basil's voice Do you? Do you really?

Hutchison Yes, I do, now stand up like a man, come on.

Basil's voice . . . Bit of trouble with the old leg, actually.

Hutchinson Come on!

He picks Basil up. Basil has found a stapler. He shows it to Walt.

Basil Look what I've found!

Hutchison I hope I've made my point.

Basil Absolutely! *(to Walt)* I've been looking for that.

Hutchison I would just like to say that this hotel is extremely inefficient and badly run, and that you are a very rude and discourteous man, Mr Fawlty.

Basil *(happily)* Ah ha ha ha ha.

Hutchison . . . Did I say something funny, Mr Fawlty?

Basil . . . Well, sort of pithy, I suppose.

Hutchison Oh really. . . well, here's the punch line. *(he elbows Basil in the stomach; Basil doubles up out of sight)* Now I am going to fetch my belongings, and I do not expect to receive a bill. *(he goes off upstairs)*

Sybil *(comes in, leans over the desk and looks down at Basil)* You've handled that, then, have you, Basil?

Basil's voice Yes dear, thank you, leave it to me.

She goes off; Walt finishes his call.

- Basil** *(hauling himself into view)* Incidentally, I don't know if you realize, but he's a regular customer of ours . . . he loves it here, it's his second home. It's just that we always have to have this little . . . don't know why, but he seems to like it.
- Walt** Really?
- Basil** Yes, the only danger is, though, that somebody's going to think he really isn't satisfied about something or that the fighting's real, and tell people. You won't mention it, will you . . . we'd be delighted to offer you dinner here tonight as our guest, to show our gratitude.
- Walt** . . .What?
- Basil** Dinner tonight . . . would you . . . ?
- Walt** *(puzzled)* No, I can't tonight, thank you.
- Basil** Tomorrow night?
- Walt** . . . I shall be leaving tomorrow. Sorry.
- Basil** . . . All right. Fifty pounds, then!
- Walt** I beg your pardon?
- Basil** Fifty pounds not to mention it.
- Walt** Fifty pounds?!!
- Basil** . . . Sixty, then! . . . Not to write about it. . . you know, articles, books, letters . . . *(taking out his wallet)*
- Walt** I'm afraid I really don't. . .
- Basil** *(clutching him)* Please! Oh please! It's taken us twelve years to build this place up. If you put this in the book we're finished.
- Walt** What book?
- Basil** The hotel guide. Oh . . . I'm sorry, I shouldn't have mentioned it. *(emits a strangled high-pitched whine)* Oh, what have I done?
- Walt** Look, I think you've got me confused with somebody else. I'm nothing to do with any hotel guide. I'm down here for the Exhibition - we sell outboard motors . . . all right?
- Basil** *(now sobbing uncontrollably)* Outboard motors? . . . You're not an inspector?
- Walt** No.
- Basil** Not on the side or anything?
- Walt** No.
- Basil** *(gabbing him)* Swear to God.
- Walt** I tell you, I've nothing to do with it!

Basil Thank you, thank you, oh, thank you so much. I don't know how I can ever . . .
(he suddenly freezes; a pause) Thanks.

He disappears into the kitchen. Walt leaves by the main doors.

Three men walk into the hotel past him; they are the inspectors.

1st Inspector Twenty-six rooms, twelve with private bathrooms.

2nd Inspector Yes, well, why don't you have dinner here, and Chris and I can try the Claremont.

3rd Inspector OK. The owner's one Basil Fawlty.

They ring the bell. At that moment Hutchison comes downstairs carrying his briefcase. Manuel, carrying a large jug, scampers up to him.

Manuel Please, please! Mr Fawlty wants to say *adios*.

Basil strides out of the kitchen and firmly places a large squidgy pie in Hutchison's crotch and another in his face.

Basil Manuel, the cream.

He opens Hutchison's briefcase and Manuel pours a pint of best quality cream into it. The Major comes up.

The Major Papers arrived yet, Fawlty?

Basil Not yet, Major, no, sorry.

The Major wanders off; Basil shakes the briefcase thoroughly and tucks it under Hutchison's arm.

Basil Now go away. If you ever come back I shall kill you.

He propels the stunned Hutchison out of the main door, turns expansively and kisses Manuel on the forehead. He then strides triumphantly to the counter and beams at the new arrivals.

Basil Good afternoon, and what can I do for you three gentlemen? *(a pause; then the terrible truth dawns)* . . . Aaaagh!!!

BLACKOUT

END MUSIC

CURTAIN